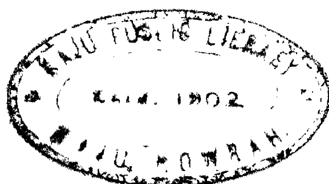
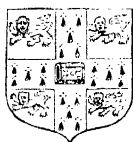
CAMBRIDGE HISTORICAL READERS

EDITED BY G. F. BOSWORTH, F.R.G.S.

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QUEEN ELIZABETH

CAMBRIDGE HISTORICAL READERS

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CONTENTS

LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS

1. THE STORY OF QUEEN BOADICEA

Two thousand years ago, the country in which we live, and to which we are proud to belong, was very different from what it is to-day. It was then called Britain, as now; but, instead of being one of the richest and most powerful of countries, it was scarcely known to the rest of the world.

Far away from Britain there was the great city and empire of Rome. The Romans, as its people were called, were very brave and skilful in war, and had conquered nearly all the other nations of the world.

So we find that, at last, they sent a large army, in hundreds of ships, to add our island home to their already large empire.

The Britons fought bravely against their powerful foes; but, instead of always

fighting side by side, they were often quarrelling among themselves. Now, there were many kings or chiefs in our land, each ruling over a tribe, as it was called.

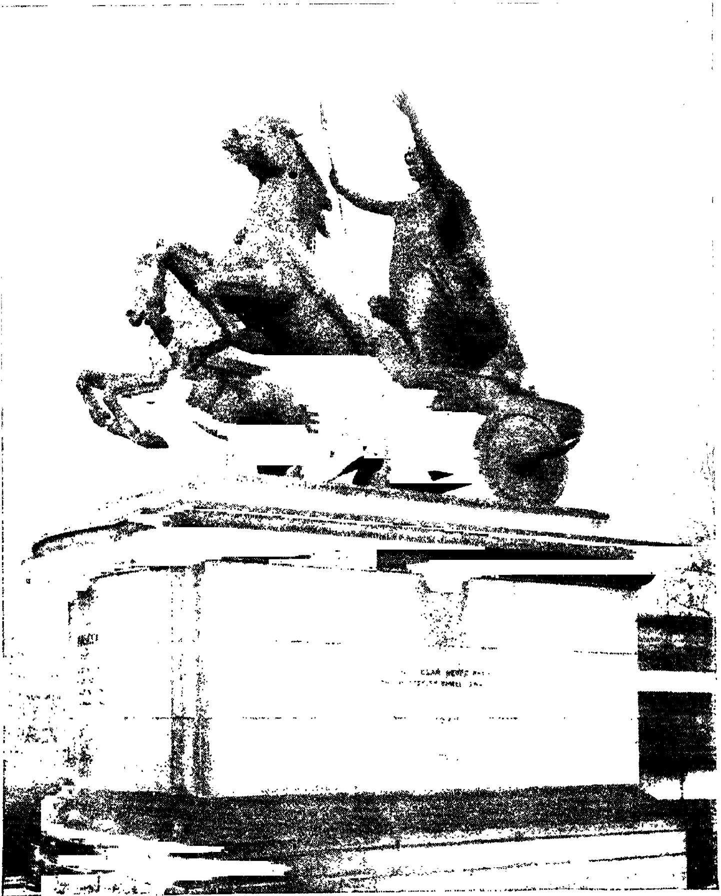
One of these tribes, the Iceni, lived in that part of our country now known as Norfolk and Suffolk. The chief of that tribe had made friends with the Romans, and, when he died, he left half of his money and lands to them, and the other half to his queen, Boadicea, and her daughters.

He thought that, by doing this, his queen and daughters would be kindly treated by the Romans; but this was not the case.

Not content with what they had already, the Romans seized the property of queen Boadicea; and it is said that they even went so far as to beat her and her daughters with rods. They also behaved very cruelly to her people.

You can understand how insulted the brave queen would feel, at being treated in this way. She called her subjects

together, and, when they heard the story



The statue of Boadicea on the Thames embankment

of her wrongs, they were eager to march against the Romans.

The Romans had already built some towns, and it was against three of these, London, Colchester and St Albans, that the fierce Britons marched. The Roman army was away in another part of Britain, and these towns were defended only by some old soldiers.

They were quite unable to stand against the fierce attacks of the angry Britons, who not only destroyed these three towns, but also killed all the men, women and children living in them.

When the Roman general heard the bad news, he set out at once with his army to meet the Britons. Queen Boadicea heard of his coming, and ordered her men to make a strong camp, in what is now called Epping Forest.

It was not long before the Roman army drew near, and a camp was quickly made, not far from that of queen Boadicea. Both armies at once got ready to fight.

Before the battle began, queen Boadicea made a great speech to her

men. She stood in a war chariot, spear in hand, with a bright collar of gold round her neck, showing that she was a queen.

She said to her troops, "Are you willing to remain the slaves of the Romans, or do you wish to be free men? Do not fear them—they are few in number, and you are as brave as they."

The brave words of their queen put new life into the Britons, and they felt quite sure they would beat the Romans easily. So sure were they, that they allowed their women and children to watch the fight, from a number of wagons at the rear.

The Roman soldiers went into the fight in splendid order, and, brave as the Britons were, they were, in the end, forced to flee. This they could not do very well, as the wagons at the rear barred their way.

So a terrible slaughter took place, the Romans killing women, children and even the cattle of their enemies. They could not forget the sad sight which they

had seen in London of houses burned, and their friends cruelly murdered.

We are not quite sure what became of the brave queen; but most people think that she put an end to her life by taking poison, rather than fall into the hands of the Romans.

A writer of that time tells us that the Roman governor, after winning this great victory, was more cruel than before; but still the Britons would not give in. So, at last, a kind governor was sent from Rome, and, in a short time, the Britons laid down their arms.

Before many years had passed, they were quite good friends with their Roman masters. They copied the Roman dress, and learned how to build better houses and streets.

From Rome, too, came fruit and flowers, such as the apple and plum, the rose and the violet: and, best of all, the Britons forsook their old gods and became Christians.

2. KING ARTHUR AND THE KNIGHTS OF THE ROUND TABLE

The Romans remained in our country 400 years; but, in the end, they were forced to take away all their soldiers from Britain, to defend their great city, Rome.

Then, bands of fierce men, known as the English, came over the North sea, each band trying to gain a part of this country for itself.

An old British chief, who is generally spoken of as king Arthur, gained a great victory over the English, at a place named mount Badon. Some very pretty stories are told of this king—stories, which, even though they be not true, have been read with great delight by children, for hundreds of years.

We are told that when Arthur was born, no one was told of his birth, except a wise man named Merlin. Merlin gave the baby prince into the care of a good

knight named Sir Hector, who had him trained as a king's son should be. While Arthur was still a young man, his father, the king, died.

As no one knew anything about Arthur, a number of great men claimed the crown. This led to a great deal of fighting, and very soon the country was in a very bad state.

Merlin now came forward, and told the great lords, that if they would meet him at a certain place, they would find out who was the true heir to the throne.

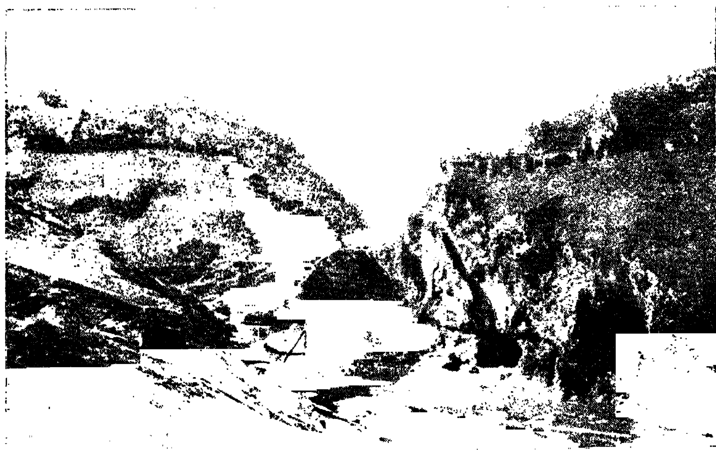
They met in a great church, and then a very solemn service was held. After the service was over, all the people went into the churchyard. There they found a large block of marble. On the top of this was an anvil of solid steel.

Firmly fixed in the anvil was a very bright sword, and on the handle were these words, "He who pulls out this sword is the rightful king of Britain."

Nearly all the great men tried to remove the sword, but in vain. Now, it so happened, that soon after this, Sir Hector,

and his son, Sir Kaye, attended by Arthur, rode near the place.

Suddenly, Sir Kaye found that he had forgotten his sword. So he sent Arthur back to find it. Arthur could not find Sir Kaye's sword, but, as he was returning, he came through the churchyard.



King Arthur's castle, Tintagel, Cornwall

Here he saw the sword embedded in the stone, and, without reading the words on it, he seized it by the handle, and it came out quite easily. When Sir Hector saw Arthur bearing the sword, and read what was written on it, he and his son knelt down and greeted Arthur as king.

Soon afterwards, in the presence of all the great lords, Arthur again drew the sword from the anvil, although no one else could move it. All who saw it cried out "Arthur and no other shall be king."

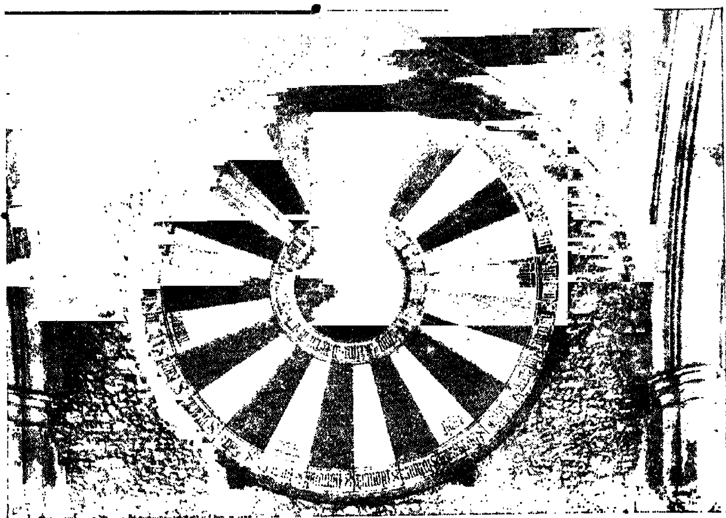
It was a good thing for the country that the king had been found, for war had turned a fair land into a wilderness. The fields were covered with weeds, the houses were in ruins, and the misery of the people had made them forget God.

King Arthur at once began to change all this. He made broad roads through the land, and cleared the country of bad men, who were doing much mischief.

As he could not do everything himself, he called together a band of noble men to help him. These had the honour of sitting at table with the king, and they were called "The Knights of the Round Table."

Before anyone could become a knight of the Round Table he had to prove that he was of noble birth, and had done some very brave deed. He then had to

promise to be true to the king, to help his brother knights—even at the cost of his own life—and to be always ready to defend women and children from all harm.



King Arthur's Round Table, Winchester county hall

King Arthur also believed that his knights could not do the greatest deeds of bravery unless they were good. Of one of them we are told that, "His strength was as the strength of ten, because his heart was pure."

We have not time to tell here of

the many wonderful doings of Arthur and his knights. Tennyson, one of our greatest poets, has told us, in noble verse, of their great deeds. You may read there of Arthur's magic sword, Excalibur, of his beautiful queen, and how he passed from this world.

The Britons believed, long after his death, that he would return and save them from their cruel foes, and it is pleasant for us to remember, that at least two places are named after this old British king. One, Cader Idris, is a mountain in Wales: the other, Arthur's Seat, overlooks the old city of Edinburgh, the capital of Scotland.

3. THE GOSPEL IN SCOTLAND, OR THE STORY OF SAINT COLUMBA

In the last chapter we saw how the heathen English came to Britain. Before many years had passed, the Christian religion was quite stamped out. In the northern part of our island, or Scotland,

as we now speak of it, the people, too, did not know the truth. They still worshipped false gods, and were also very rough and rude in their habits. They thought more of hunting and fighting than of anything else.

To the west of Britain lies a beautiful green island, which is now known as Ireland. In those times it was spoken of as "the Isle of Saints," for there, peace and quiet reigned, and men thought most of learning, and of leading holy lives. Some of them were very clever in making fine ornaments of gold and silver; while others loved to spend their time in making copies of the Bible, or of some part of it.

In the north of Ireland there lived a scholar named Finnian, who had a beautiful copy of the Psalms. One of the pupils of Finnian was a young man named Columba, who wished very much to have this book for himself.

His master, however, would not part with it, neither would he allow Columba to make a copy of it. This book was

always kept in the church, and at last Columba thought of a plan by which he might copy it.

He went to church every day, and, after service was over, he remained behind to copy the book which he prized. It took him a long time to do this, and, one day, Finnian happened to return, and found out what he had been doing.

He then claimed the copy as his own, but, as you may suppose, Columba was not willing to part with it.

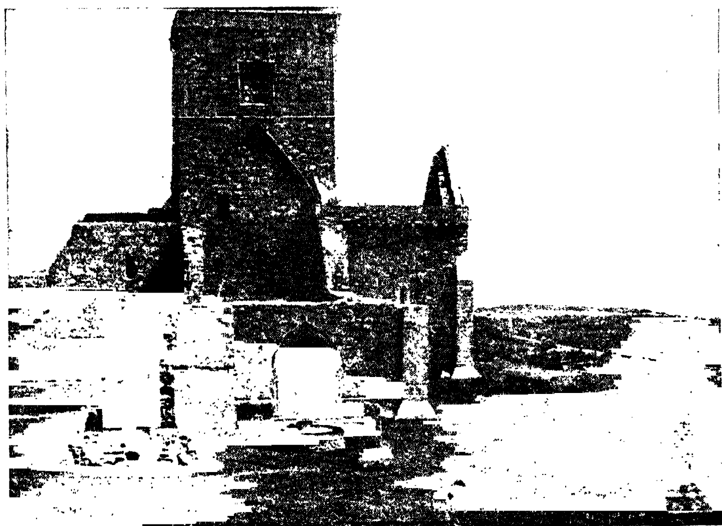
So they went to the king of that part of Ireland, and asked him to say whose the volume was. The king replied, "To every cow belongs its own calf." This was a quaint way of saying that the copy belonged to the owner of the book, that is, to Finnian.

Strange to say, this quarrel led to a war, for Columba was of royal blood, and had many powerful friends. No less than three battles were fought between him and the king; and, in the end, Columba thought it best to leave the country.

With twelve of his friends, most of

whom were of high rank, Columba left his native land. Their boat, of wicker work covered with skins, was a very frail bark in which to cross a stormy sea.

Day after day passed, and at length a small island was reached. Here the



Iona cathedral from Abbot's Mound

friends made up their minds to make their home, to which they gave the name Iona.

They soon set to work to build a church. Close to it, they set up a number of small houses, or cells, made of wattles.

Then there was a house where they all met together for meals ; one that was used as a kitchen ; and another where they all slept. Round the whole of the buildings a deep ditch was dug, so that wild animals or evil men could not easily molest them.

Soon the little island became famous. Chiefs and kings visited it, and heard the Gospel story from the lips of Columba or his monks. Many places in Scotland can be reached by water: so we find the missionaries, as we may call them, using a little fleet of vessels to go from place to place.

Wherever they went, a church was built. Look at a map of Scotland, and you will find the names of many places beginning with "Kil." The word "Kil" is an Irish word, meaning a church; so, most likely, in places thus named, a church was built by Columba, or his followers.

In this way, Scotland became a Christian land, and we may very well speak of Columba, as "the Apostle of Scotland." He lived to be an old man, dying in the

year 597. In this same year, a band of missionaries came from Rome to the south of England, and, before many years had passed, the whole of Britain had become Christian.

Columba was buried near the church he had built. His friends lovingly kept the books and other things he had used, and pilgrims came from far and wide to see them.

At Iona, many ruins of churches, tombs and carved crosses may still be seen. Kings of Scotland, and even of Norway, thought it a great honour to be buried in the place made holy by the good deeds of St Columba.

4. THE STORY OF AIDAN, OR THE GOSPEL IN THE NORTH

In this chapter you will hear of two men, who both lived at Iona, and, like Columba, were eager to convert the heathen to the true religion.

The first of these was a prince named

Oswald. He came from a part of our island, then called Northumbria, over which his father had ruled. He was only a lad when he took refuge at Iona, but he was not too young to learn a great deal from the pious monks. Soon we hear of him returning to his native land as a king.

He found that his people had forgotten nearly all that the missionaries from the south of England had taught them. They had returned to the old worship of the sun, the moon and the god of thunder.

This caused king Oswald much sorrow, for he had become a true Christian, and wished to give his life for the good of his subjects.

So we find him sending to far-away Iona for a missionary. A very stern preacher was sent, but he soon returned, saying that the people were so stubborn and savage that he could not teach them anything.

A young monk, named Aidan, said, "Perhaps you did not speak kindly to

these poor people. Instead of telling them of the love of Christ, perhaps you told them only of God's anger at their wrong doing."

When the other monks heard this, they all thought that Aidan himself



Lindisfarne priory, Holy island

would be the best one to send. Aidan gladly went, and made his home on the small island of Lindisfarne, which was afterwards known as Holy island.

The good monks, in those days, loved to dwell in such quiet places as this, where they could teach their pupils, and

do all kinds of useful work in safety. The little island soon became famous, for good men went from it to all parts of the north of England, and the south of Scotland, carrying the good news of the Gospel.

You may be sure that king Oswald helped Aidan and his missionaries as much as he could in their work. A beautiful story is told of this great and good king.

One day, he was sitting at meat with Aidan, when he was told that a crowd of beggars were waiting at the gate of his palace. He at once ordered that all the food on the table before them should be given to these poor people; and that the great silver dish, on which the meat had been placed, should be broken into small pieces, and divided among them.

Aidan was delighted with this good act of the king. Seizing the royal hand, he said, "May the hand that hath done this good deed never grow old!"

A sad time was now coming to the land over which king Oswald ruled. A fierce and savage king, named Penda,



Bamborough castle, Northumberland

who still prayed to the old false gods, and hated the Christians, marched with a great army against him.

In the fierce fight which followed, king Oswald was slain. As he lay dying, those around him caught the words, "Lord, have mercy on the souls of my people!" His body and limbs were set up on stakes, by order of the savage king Penda, and an old story tells us that, long after these were decayed, the hand which Aidan had blessed remained white and fair as in life.

For several years, Penda carried fire and sword through the unhappy land. At last he led his army against Bamborough, the strongest fortress of all. So strong was it, that the old king felt quite sure that he could not break through the walls in the usual way.

So his men piled wood against it and set fire to it. The wind blew the flames towards the town. Now at this time Aidan was on Farne island and, from the windows of his room, the good bishop could see all that was happening.

The story relates that he cried, "See, Lord, what evil Penda is doing," and at once the wind changed, blowing the flames away from the city, which was thus saved.

Many other stories are told of Aidan, which seem to show us, that the people believed that he had special powers given to him by God. This perhaps explains why his preaching was very successful. Certain it is that, before long, the country had again become Christian, and has remained so, even to this day. After his death he was spoken of as St Aidan; and many churches are named after him in the north of England.

5. ALFRED THE ROYAL HARPER

In this chapter we shall read of one of the best kings that ever lived, king Alfred the great. It is more than a thousand years since he lived; but we still like to hear the story of his great and beautiful life.

For some years before he was born, our country had been troubled by a fierce race of heathens, known as the Northmen, or Danes. These men, like the English many years before, came over the North sea.

They rowed up the mouths of rivers, and, as soon as they landed, at once made a strong camp. From this safe place they would go out into the country round about, burning churches and houses, putting men, women and children to cruel deaths, and stealing everything worth having.

Alfred began to rule over a part of England, known as Wessex, when he was twenty-two years old. All the country north of the river Thames was over-run by the Danes, and now they came into Wessex also.

Alfred fought very bravely for several years, sometimes winning a battle, at another time losing one. It was hard work, for, as fast as the Danes were killed, others took their places. At last they came in such large numbers, that



Statue of king Alfred, Winchester

Alfred was forced to flee for his life. With a few of his men, he hid on a small island in Somersetshire. All around were wide marshes not easy to cross, and so Alfred felt quite safe there.

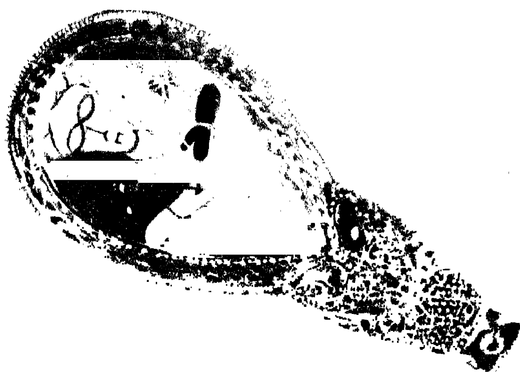
In his hiding-place, he was ever thinking of how he could beat his fierce foes. Now, not far away, the Danes had made a strong camp. They thought they had nothing to fear from Alfred; so they spent their days in feasting and drinking, and did not keep a very good watch.

In his younger days, Alfred had learned to play on the harp, and could sing as he played. The Northmen, like the English, were very fond of music: so the thought came into the king's mind, "Why should I not go into the Danish camp, as a minstrel? I may hear what they are going to do next, and I shall be more ready to fight them, if I know that."

He put on a minstrel's dress, and, like the brave man that he was, went boldly into the camp of the Danes. Now, Alfred had always been fond of learning poetry,

for in those days the stories of brave deeds were always told in verse.

So he sang to the Danes the songs of Woden the god of war and Thor the god of thunder, and of the brave men of northern lands. This pleased them very



King Alfred's jewel

much, and very soon he was asked to play before king Guthrum and his chiefs, as they sat at meat.

Of course, Alfred was quite ready to do this, and he pleased them very much with his playing. They gave him plenty to eat and drink, and it is said that

Guthrum gave him a gold cup which had once been Alfred's own, but which had been stolen by the Danes.

He was also allowed to go about the camp just as he pleased, and, in doing so, he heard all about their plans. When he thought he had learned enough, he quietly left the camp and returned to his men. He quickly got a little army together, and fell upon the Danes, when they were not at all ready to fight. This time, as you may suppose, he gave them a good beating.

Now, what do you think Alfred did after this? He might have put all the Danes to death; but, instead of that, he tried to make them his friends. So he said that, if they would become Christians, he would give them a part of England where they could live.

Guthrum and most of his men agreed to this, and promised to live in peace. The part of England in which they lived was known as the Dane-law. Only once, during the rest of Alfred's life, did the Danes break their word;

so Alfred's plan of turning enemies into friends was a very good one.

Now that most of the fighting was over, this wise king at once set to work to prevent other Danes coming to England, and to do all he could to make his people happy. He built a great number of ships—much bigger than those of the Danes—and these were always sailing round our coasts on the look out for the Northmen.

Then, too, he had schools built, and asked clever men to come from other lands to teach his people. He also found time to teach himself a great deal; and it is said he always carried a book in his bosom, so that, when he had a spare moment, he might read.

It would make a very long story to tell of all the wise and good things that Alfred did. He did not live to be very old, and you will understand how sorry his people were when he died.

A thousand years have passed away, but, in all that time, we have not had any better king than Alfred the truth-teller, England's darling, Alfred the Great.

6. KING CANUTE BY THE SEA-SHORE

About 100 years after good king Alfred died, the Danes began to trouble our land once more. The king of England, at that time was neither brave nor wise; so we find he was quite unable to drive away his enemies. In fact, he himself fled to another land for safety.

The leader of the Danes, named Canute or Knut, then became king of England, and ruled the country well. When quite a young man, he had been very fierce and savage, and he was once heard to say, "I call that man my friend who brings me the heads of my enemies."

Canute became a Christian, and now all he thought about was the good of his people, and how he might gain their love. He built churches and schools, and ruled the land by the laws which the wise Alfred had made.

He treated the native English just as

well as his own countrymen, the Danes: indeed, he sent his large army out of the country, thus showing the English people that he could trust them. He was king of three other countries besides England.

Now, as I daresay you know, a king is often surrounded by men who wish to please him in every way. They are apt to think that, if they praise and flatter their royal master, they will get rich rewards for their trouble.

Even a foolish and bad king is sometimes made to believe that he is wise and good. Canute had his flatterers, too. They told him that he was the greatest king that ever lived. Not only was he master on land, but the sea, also, would do his bidding.

King Canute had too much sense to be pleased with such silly talk as this. So he made up his mind to teach these men a useful lesson, as soon as he had the chance to do so.

Now, not far away from the royal city of Winchester, where Canute lived, was a seaport named Southampton. Once

the king was staying there, and, as usual, his courtiers were telling him of his greatness. "This," thought the king, "is just the time and the place to show them how foolish they are."

So he ordered his royal chair to be brought down to the sea-shore, quite close to the water's edge. The tide was coming in. Canute sat down in his chair, and in loud tones told the waves not to flow over and wet his feet.

Around him stood his flatterers—now, quite silent—for they could see they were going to be found out. Of course, as you may suppose, the waves took no notice of the king's command. In a still louder voice, he cried, "O sea, I, your king, command you to go back."

Soon, the tide was flowing all round the king's seat and where his courtiers were standing. He rose from his seat, and, turning to those near him, who were almost ashamed to look him in the face, he said: "You see how well the waves obey me. God has made me a king on land, but He, and He alone, can say to

the sea, 'Thus far shalt thou come and no further.'"

It is said that, after this, Canute would never wear his crown. He hung it up in the cathedral at Winchester, over an image of our Saviour. No doubt, when-



Knutsford, Cheshire

ever people looked up and saw it, they would feel how wrong it is to be proud and vain.

In the town of Southampton, a building may still be seen which is said to have been a part of Canute's palace; and, on

the sea-shore, there is a large stone to show where he sat.

A pretty village in the county of Cheshire, known as Knutsford, keeps in memory the name of a king who tried to do the best he could for his people. Canewdon, in Essex, is also said to be named after Canute, and marks the site of a battle that was fought between him and Edmund Ironside.

7. THE STORY OF MACBETH

Most boys and girls have heard, at some time or another, of Shakespeare. He was a famous writer of plays, that is, stories which are acted on the stage.

One of Shakespeare's best plays is *Macbeth*. Macbeth lived in Scotland, about the time that king Canute was reigning in England. In the play, we are told that king Duncan of Scotland sent Macbeth with an army against the Danes. He beat them, and was return-

ing home, when a strange thing happened to him.

He was crossing a lonely moor when, suddenly, he was met by three weird-looking creatures, who were said to be witches. The first one said, "Hail, Macbeth, hail to thee, Thane of Glamis!" The second said "Hail, Macbeth, hail to thee, Thane of Cawdor!" while the third said, "Hail, Macbeth, that shall be king hereafter!"

Before Macbeth could ask them any questions, the weird sisters had vanished from his sight. While he was still thinking of what they had said, a messenger came and told him that his father was dead, and that he was now thane of Glamis. Soon after, a second messenger met him and told him that the king had made him thane of Cawdor. This was a reward for beating the Danes.

"Now," thought Macbeth, "I wonder whether the saying of the third witch will come to pass." This was, you will remember, that he should be king of Scotland. When he reached home,

he told his wife, lady Macbeth, all that had happened to him.

She said to her husband, "You cannot be king while Duncan is alive. So we must ask him to come and see us, and then you must kill him while he is asleep." At first, Macbeth would not hear of such a wicked thing, but, in the end, he agreed to do as his wife wished.

So the king came to their castle, and, while he was fast asleep, he was cruelly murdered by Macbeth. Then Macbeth and his wife became king and queen of Scotland.

Now all this is part of the story which Shakespeare has written; but most people think that it is not quite true, and that Macbeth was far from being a bad king. We believe that there was a battle between king Duncan and his under-king, Macbeth, and that Duncan was beaten, and had to flee for his life. We believe, too, that he was killed in some way or another. Indeed, a stone hut is still pointed out as marking the spot where he was killed.

His two sons fled to England, where they were kindly treated. After a time, Malcolm, the elder son, asked the English king to help him to get back his father's throne. The English king, Edward, did



Birnam wood

not love fighting, but he allowed earl Siward, a brave old warrior, to lead an army into Scotland.

King Macbeth was in a strong castle, called Dunsinane, when the English army, under Malcolm and earl Siward,

drew near. A few miles away, there was a wood known as Birnam wood.

Shakespeare says that the witches had told Macbeth that he would be quite safe "till Birnam wood came to Dunsinane." The king did not very well see how a wood could move, and so he felt he had nothing to fear.

Now Malcolm did not wish Macbeth to know how many men he had: so he told each man in his army to cut a large branch off a tree, and carry it in front of him. Thus it seemed as though Birnam wood came to Dunsinane.

In the fight which took place, earl Siward and his men fought so well that Macbeth was beaten. Malcolm then became king of Scotland. He was a big, rough man, but we are pleased to know that he married an English princess, who, as the "Good queen Margaret," became one of the best queens that Scotland ever had.

Before this story closes, you will like to hear a little more about brave old

Siward. He died about a year after he had been fighting in Scotland. When he knew that his end was near, he said to those around him, "Lift me up, that I may die standing, and not lying down, like a cow." So, girt with helmet and sword, he died, like a soldier in battle.

8. HEREWARD "THE LAST OF THE ENGLISH"

More than 800 years ago, there was living in the county of Lincolnshire a rich Englishman, known as the lord of Bourn.

He had a son named Hereward, who was taller and stronger than anyone living in that part of England. His great strength and love of fighting led him into many a quarrel; and so most people were not very sorry when he crossed the sea to fight in other lands.

Now about this time, a sad trouble befell our native land. A great warrior, William, duke of Normandy, came across

the strait of Dover with a large army. In the famous battle of Hastings, fought in the year 1066, our brave king, Harold, was slain. William the Norman then became the ruler of England, and he gave most of the land in this country to his Norman friends.

The father of Hereward was now dead; and, soon, news came to the brave young Englishman that his old home had been given to a follower of the new king. Hereward came home at once, and very soon gathered a few friends round him. With these, he made such a fierce attack on the Norman that he was forced to flee.

In this way, Hereward won back his old home, but he was not allowed to remain in peace. All the Normans near banded themselves together to punish this daring man; so Hereward and his friends had to flee to a very safe place known as the Isle of Ely.

We still call this part of England the Fens; and in Hereward's day it well deserved the name. All around was a



Ely cathedral

waste of waters, with here and there a little island. There were swamps, too, in which a man could easily sink and thus lose his life. Here, then, Hereward formed his "Camp of Refuge," as it was called.

Day by day, his little band grew larger; for the news soon spread that *one* brave Englishman scorned to yield to the cruel Normans; and those who had suffered at their hands got a very good welcome indeed from Hereward. There was not much fear of food running short, for these hardy men could live on the fish and wild fowl which swarmed around them.

For a long time the Normans had tried in vain to get near their foes, but this was no easy matter. Men clad in armour did not dare to cross the swamps, and they could not find a path across them. And so, for some years, Hereward and his men were quite safe.

But at last, king William, himself, came with an army against these brave Fen men. He soon saw that he must

make some kind of a path across the swamps. So he got a great number of skins blown full of air, and then beams of wood were laid upon them.



Workers in the Fens

Slowly but surely, the floating bridge grew. But one day, Hereward and his men stole out of the camp and set fire to some reeds growing near the bridge.

A number of Normans were burnt, and others, in their hurry to get away, fell into the soft slimy ground, where they sank, and so lost their lives.

Still, king William kept on with the work, and in time the path was finished. And now, thousands of Normans, clad in heavy coats of mail, began to cross the frail bridge; but before they could reach the Camp of Refuge the path gave way beneath them. Soon, most of them were struggling in the mud, where they quickly sank, never to rise again.

It is said that, in the end, the monks of Ely sent to king William, and offered to show him a secret path to the island, if he would spare their monastery. William gave the promise; the Camp of Refuge was taken at last; and more than a thousand of its brave defenders were killed.

We are not quite certain what became of Hereward. Some say that he cut his way through the Norman ranks, and escaped to France: others tell us that the king was so pleased with his

wonderful bravery, that he allowed him to return to his old home at Bourn.

Whatever was the end of this brave hero, we know that for many years afterwards his countrymen loved to tell, in song and story, of his daring deeds. As there was not one after him who dared to fight against king William, we generally speak of Hereward, as "the Last of the English."

9. THE RED KING IN THE NEW FOREST

When William the Conqueror died, his second son, William, became king. He had red hair and a very red face, and so he was often called "Rufus," which means "The Red." His reign was a short one, and it was a good thing for the country that it was so; for Rufus was a very bad and cruel king.

The best thing we can say of him is that he was very brave. Once he wanted

to cross the sea to France. When he reached the sea-shore, a great storm was raging, and the sailors said it was not safe to put out to sea. But William only laughed at their fears. He got on board the first ship he could see, and ordered the captain to set sail, saying, "Did you ever hear of a king being drowned?"

The Red king and his Norman friends were fond of hunting deer. Quite close to the city of Winchester where the king lived, was a large forest, known as the New Forest. There had always been a forest in that part of the country, but William the Conqueror had made it much larger.

He did this by pulling down a number of churches and houses, and driving away poor people. The deer could thus roam through the leafy glades without being disturbed. If a poor man dared to kill one of these royal animals, he was cruelly punished by having his eyes put out.

One fine day in August, in the year 1100, a great party met together for a

day's hunting in the New Forest. The king and his brother, prince Henry, were there, and so was a Norman knight, Sir Walter Tyrrell, one of the king's friends, and a great hunter like himself.

Rufus had spent the night before at Malwood Keep, a kind of hunting lodge, and the old writers tell us that his sleep was broken by fearful dreams.

In the morning, too, an old woman begged him not to go out to the hunt, as evil would surely befall him that day. "Am I to be frightened by an old woman's tale?" asked the rough and ready king, and away he gaily rode to the chase.

All through the day, Sir Walter Tyrrell kept close to the king's side, quite away from the rest of the party. Late in the afternoon, a large stag suddenly darted from the bushes, and passed between the king and his friend.

Rufus at once drew his bow, but the string broke and the arrow fell to the ground. The startled deer stopped its flight for a moment, and the king at once

called out to the knight, "Shoot, Walter, shoot!"

Tyrrell did so; but the arrow, instead of going straight to its mark, glanced against the trunk of a tree, and then struck the king, piercing him to the heart. He fell from his horse, quite dead.

You can understand how alarmed Sir Walter was, when he saw what he had done. No one else had seen what had happened: so, very likely he thought people would say he had really meant to kill the king. He therefore galloped away from the fatal spot as fast as he could. He soon reached the sea coast, got into a ship, and sailed across the Channel to France.

Now all this time the dead king was lying where he fell. It is said that, when prince Henry heard of the sad event, he at once rode with all speed to Winchester, to seize the money and jewels belonging to his dead brother.

In the evening, a poor charcoal burner was passing through the forest and saw

the dead body of the king. He placed it in his cart and carried it to the great church at Winchester, where it was buried.

For hundreds of years afterwards, an oak tree was pointed out as being the



The Rufus Stone, in the New Forest

one against which the fatal arrow glanced. A stone was set up in the place where it fell, and this is called "The Rufus Stone."

No one was sorry that the Red king was dead. As an old writer says, "He feared God but little, and man not at all."

10. THE LOSS OF THE WHITE SHIP, OR, HOW A PRINCE WAS DROWNED

Prince Henry became king of England after the death of William Rufus. He is sometimes spoken of as Henry the scholar, because he could read and write and knew a little Greek and Latin. He was fond of animals, too, and is said to have kept a menagerie at Woodstock, in Oxfordshire.

Henry the First, although a hard and selfish man, was much better than the Red king; and, on the whole, he ruled his people well. He pleased the native English by marrying a princess who was descended from "Good king Alfred."

King Henry and his queen had a son named prince William. When the prince was about eighteen years old, his father took him across to Normandy. At this time, Henry ruled that land as well as England, and he wished to show the great barons their future king. After the



Henry I

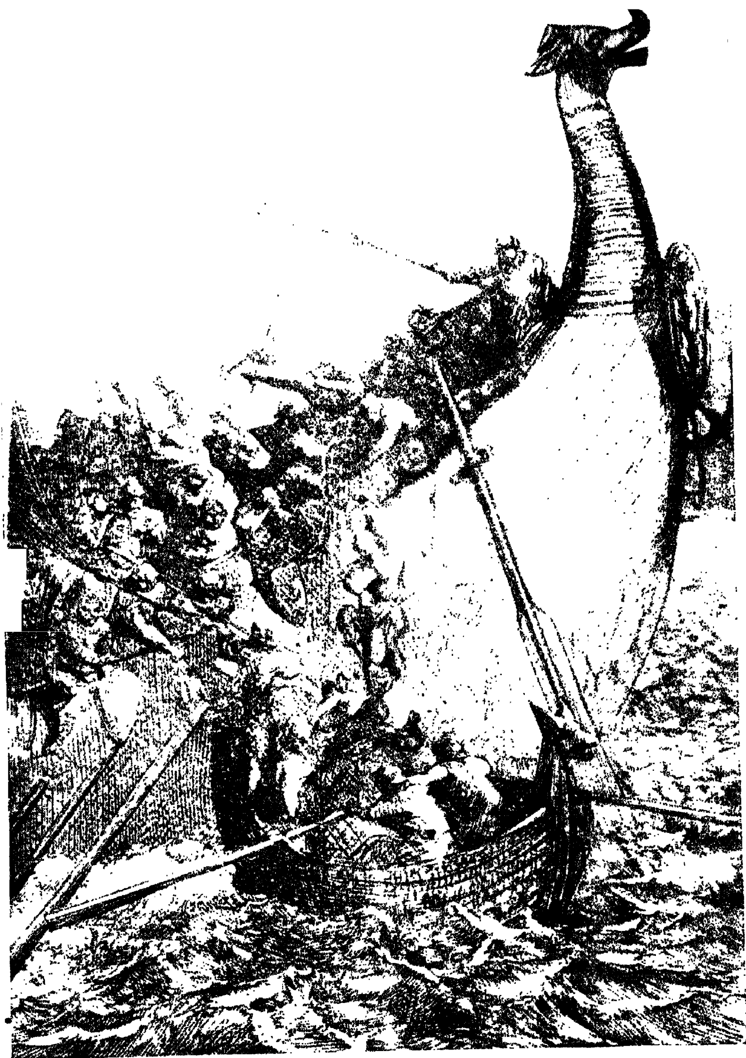
Normans had promised to serve and obey the prince when he became king, the royal party got ready to return to England.

Just as king Henry was about to go on board his ship, a sea captain named Fitz-Stephen begged leave to speak to him. When he was taken before the king, he said, "Sire, my father steered your father's ship when he sailed across the sea to win the English throne. Let me have the honour of taking you across in my fine vessel, the White Ship."

The king replied, "I have already chosen my ship; but there is my son, the prince, and his young friends, who may sail with you, if they please."

The king's vessel started some time before the White Ship: for, as the captain said, his vessel was so swift that he could easily overtake the other. Before going on board, prince William sent some wine for the sailors, who drank more than they should have done.

About midnight, the White Ship set sail. There was a fine breeze, and the fifty sailors who rowed the ship pulled at



The wreck of the White Ship

their oars as hard as they could. The prince and his young friends were very merry, and told the sailors to row still quicker.

The ship was now going very fast; but, sad to say, no one seemed to be on the watch to see that it kept in the right course. Suddenly a loud crash was heard, for the vessel had struck on a rock, and through the large rent in its side the water was fast pouring in.

A terrible cry arose from those on board, which, it is said, was heard by some of the people in the king's ship. They, however, did not know what it meant, and so thought no more about it.

When the captain saw that his ship was sinking, he put the prince and a few of his friends into the only boat there was, telling them to row as quickly as they could to shore.

This might have been done quite easily, as the sea was smooth and the night clear. But, before they had rowed very far, prince William heard his sister's voice calling for help.

In the hurry and disorder, she had been left behind. The prince at once ordered that the boat should go back for her. But, when it reached the side of the vessel, so many jumped down that the boat was upset, and all in it were cast into the sea.

The ship soon sank, and, out of nearly three hundred persons, only one man was saved. This was a butcher, who, wrapped in his sheepskin coat, managed to hold on to a floating mast till morning. Some fishermen saw him and took him into their boat. He then told them the sad story of the loss of the White Ship.

When the news reached England next day, no one cared to tell the poor king of the loss of his only son. At last, the courtiers sent a little boy, who fell at Henry's feet and told him the sad tale.

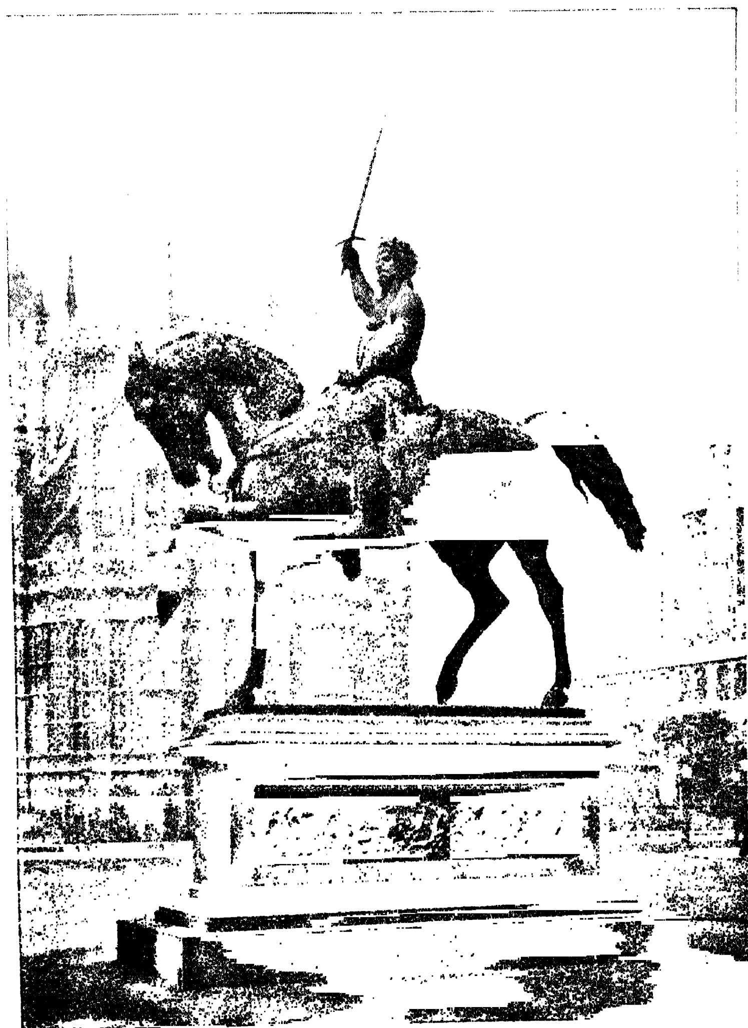
The old writers say that the king was so grieved that, during the rest of his life, he was never seen to smile. Whether this was so or not, we may be sure he never forgot the young prince, for whom he had constantly planned and thought.

11. RICHARD THE LION-HEART AND HIS BRAVE DEEDS

This story is about king Richard the First, one of the bravest of our kings. He was a big, golden-haired, handsome man, and as he was very brave, he was called Richard the Lion-Heart.

When he came to the throne, he made up his mind to go to the Holy Land to fight against the Turks. These people had taken the city of Jerusalem, where Jesus had died and had been buried. For many years past, pilgrims had travelled from all parts of Europe, to worship and pray at the Holy City.

But the Turks hated Christians, and would not let them visit the Holy Places ; so, many of the bravest kings and princes of western Europe started the crusades or wars of the Cross. They were so called because everyone taking part in them wore a cross on his arm or breast.



Statue of king Richard I at Westminster

Richard and the king of France met together, and with a fine army of 100,000 men set out to capture the Holy City. On their way they stopped and took the strong town of Acre.

As Richard had done most of the fighting, he planted his flag on the wall of the captured town. So did another crusader, the duke of Austria, who set up his flag close to that of king Richard. The Lion-Heart thought the duke very forward in doing this, and in a great temper he tore down the Austrian flag. The duke did not forget this insult as we shall see later.

From Acre, the soldiers of the Cross went on, taking strong towns, and fighting fierce battles. Everyone was talking of the wonderful deeds of the Lion-Hearted king. It is said that no one but himself could lift his great battle-axe. The sight of this great warrior, mounted on his powerful war horse, was quite enough to make the Turks flee.

In spite of all this, Richard was not able to take Jerusalem. The king of



Richard fighting in the Holy Land

France and other princes were jealous of our king, and returned to their own lands, leaving him with only a small army. The Lion-Heart was now only a few miles from Jerusalem; but, to his great sorrow, he had to make peace with the leader of the Turks.

When Richard found that he could not take Jerusalem, he would not even look at it, but hid his face in his cloak. Soon, we find him, with what was left of his army, returning by sea to England.

On the way, a great storm wrecked many of his ships. So the king resolved to set out on foot; but, unluckily for him, he had to pass through the lands of the duke of Austria. Now, Richard felt quite sure that, if the duke knew he was passing through his country, he would try to take him prisoner.

So, instead of travelling like a king, he dressed himself as a merchant, and took with him only a little boy. One day the king and his little page were passing through a small town. Richard stopped to rest at an inn, and sent the boy into

the market place to buy some food. Now, the lad was carrying a very fine purse, and in his belt there were some very costly gloves.

Several people noticed this, and thought that his master must be of very high rank. The news soon reached the ears of the duke of Austria, who felt quite sure that the boy's master must be his old enemy, the famous king Richard.

So he sent some soldiers to the place where the king was staying, and took him prisoner. Richard was now shut up in a strong castle, and for a long time his friends in England did not know where he was. Very likely many of them thought he was dead.

There is a pretty story telling how the king was found. Years before, Richard had been very fond of a minstrel named Blondel, who now resolved to find out what had become of the Lion-Hearted king. So, harp in hand, he travelled about from castle to castle. He stopped at every one, and sang some of the songs his master loved.

One day, after singing the first verse of a song, he was delighted to hear a voice, inside the castle, singing the second verse. He felt quite sure that this must be the king, and, full of joy, he returned to England with the good news.

Everyone in our country was very angry to think that the bravest warrior of the day should have been treated thus. But, for all that, a great sum of money had to be paid before Richard was set free.

In a short time the king was able to return to his native land; but, a few years afterwards, he was killed while trying to take a castle in France. We are told that, on his death bed, he freely forgave the archer who shot him.

Thus died Richard the Lion-Heart, who, although not a great king, was a fine model of a brave, true-hearted knight.

12. ROBIN HOOD AND HIS MERRY MEN

Most boys and girls, at some time or another, have paid a visit to a forest. How pleasant it is to play at hide and seek among the trees and bushes; to look for ferns and wild flowers; and to catch a glimpse of the birds and animals there!

In the days of Richard the Lion-Heart, very large forests were to be found in many parts of our country. One of these, called Sherwood forest, covered a great part of the middle of England. Here lived a bold outlaw named Robin Hood, and his merry men; and many stories are told of their free, wild life in the woodland.

We are told that Robin Hood, or, to give him his real name, Robin Fitzooth, had been a rich man at one time. But he had spent all his money, and, it is also said, had killed a man in a quarrel; so he fled to the woods for safety. Here he

was joined by others, who, like himself, had very good reasons for hiding there.

They could not have found a better place. So thickly grew the trees and bushes that, in most places, it was a hard matter to force a way through them. Then, again, wild animals, such as deer, wild boars, hares and rabbits, were plentiful, so that there was no lack of food for men who were skilful with the bow and arrow.

In many parts of the forest there were caves, in which they could make themselves fairly comfortable. One of these is pointed out, even now, as Robin Hood's stable. Here, when the weather was wet and cold, they could take shelter, or, at the close of day, amuse themselves with merry-making and song. Sometimes a wandering minstrel, who knew he had nothing to fear from Robin and his men, would pay them a visit, and cheer them with his art.

But in the long summer days their time was spent out of doors. Dancing on the green, chasing the king's deer,

and trapping smaller animals gave them fine sport.



Sherwood forest

Now, as you know, killing a deer was thought a great crime in those days, and

the sheriff, as the chief man in the county was called, sadly wanted to catch Robin and his men.

But this was no easy matter, for the outlaws knew all the narrow forest paths, and the sheriff did not. It was not at all safe for any great man, or rich abbot, to go along the bridle paths—as the roads were often called—for the outlaws took a delight in robbing such people. If, however, there were any ladies in the party, no harm befell the travellers.

These outlaws, rough though they looked and seemed, had kind hearts. Many a poor man was helped by them when in trouble; and, if the rich were robbed, the poor and weak knew that Robin Hood was their friend.

The names of some of his men have come down to us in the stories of the time. Robin's chief friend was known as "Little John." His real name was said to be John Little; but as he was seven feet high, and very big and strong likewise, he was, in pure fun, always known as "Little John." Then there were

Friar Tuck, Will Scarlet and Much the Miller's son.

Robin is said to have had more than a hundred men in his band. Everyone could shoot well, and all could deal an enemy some hard blows with the quarter-staff, a favourite weapon of Englishmen in the olden time. Indeed, a man had only to prove himself good at these sports, and he became one of Robin's men.

If, at any time, their leader found himself in danger of being taken, he had only to blow a horn, which hung round his neck. Very quickly his green-coated men would be at his side, to give him the help he needed.

Robin Hood is said to have lived to a very great age. When he was dying, he asked Little John to give him his bow. Then, with what strength he had left, he shot an arrow, and asked his men to bury him where it fell.

This they did; and in Yorkshire there may still be seen a flat stone, which, the country people say covers the grave of "Bold Robin Hood."

13. SIR WILLIAM WALLACE THE HERO OF SCOTTISH FREEDOM

Nearly a hundred years after the time of Richard the Lion-Heart, there was a great king of England named Edward the First. In Westminster abbey you may see his tomb, and on it are some Latin words which mean "Edward the First, the Hammer of the Scots." This was a very good way of describing him: for a great part of his life was spent in striking many hard blows at the people of Scotland.

Edward had conquered a little country, Wales, and he thought it would be a good thing, if he could also rule over Scotland. So we find him leading a great army into that country, and very soon most of the strong castles and towns were in his hands.

It is now that we hear of the noble Sir William Wallace. Most of the great barons in Scotland had lands in England

besides: so they did not care very much whether an English or a Scottish king ruled them. But Wallace was a true lover of his native land, and could not rest till it was free.

Like our own Richard the Lion-Heart, he was very brave and strong. He soon gathered round him a little band of men, most of whom were armed only with a pike and a shield. They were, however, ready to die for their country, which made amends for their lack of armour.

Wallace and his men moved about so quickly that they took the English by surprise. As each castle or town was taken, fresh men joined him, and so, very soon, he had a fairly large army at his back.

An English army was now sent against him. Wallace was at the head of 40,000 men, and, with these, he took up a very strong position on a hill, or crag, near the old town of Stirling. A deep river, crossed by a single bridge, ran almost round the hill.

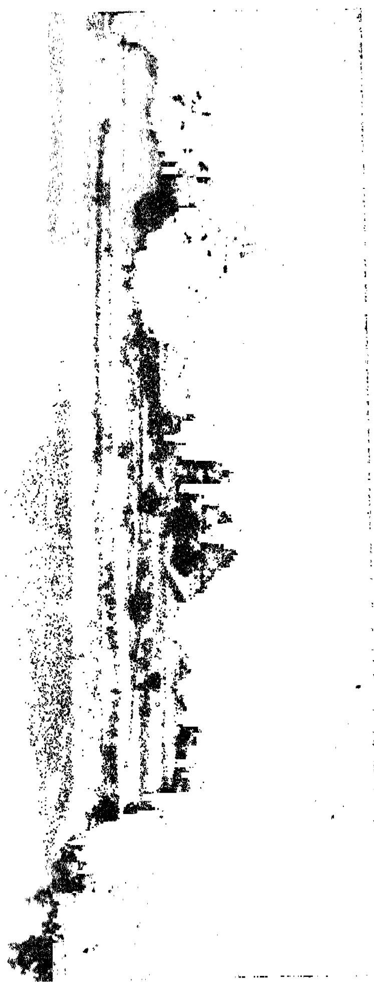
So eager were the English to get at the Scots, that they at once began to cross the narrow bridge. When about half their army was over, Wallace and his men rushed down from the hill and put the English to flight. There was a great slaughter and many fell into the river and were drowned.

The rest of the army, on the other side of the river, fled in great haste. Thus Wallace had gained a great victory, and he won back nearly all the castles and towns which the English had taken.

The bad news from Scotland soon reached the ears of king Edward, who was fighting in Flanders. He hurried home, and before long he was marching northward with a great army. Wallace did not think it wise to fight a battle, but he kept fairly close to the English, so as to give them as much trouble as he could.

Soon word came to Edward that the Scots were quite close to him, at a place called Falkirk. He at once set out for this place, and, that night, his men slept in their armour, so as to be ready in the

morning for the fight. The king, like a



Stirling from the north

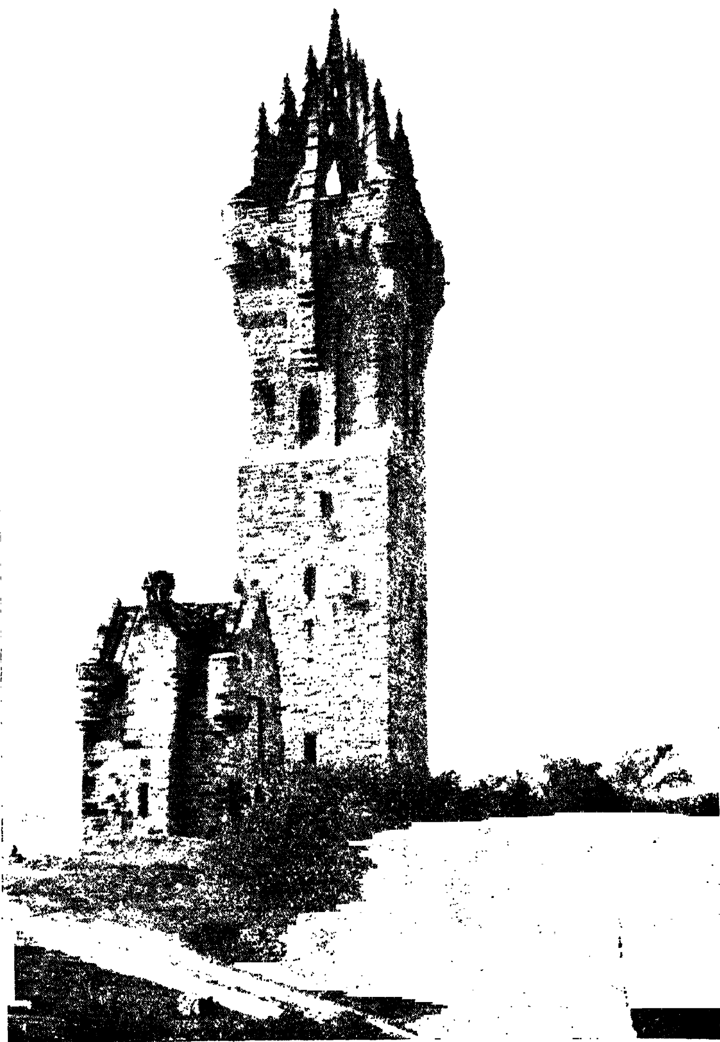
true soldier, lay on the bare ground, with his troops.

When Wallace knew that the hour of battle was near, he drew up his men in four circles. Men armed with pikes or long spears formed the outer rings, while inside were the archers.

In this battle, the English, under their great leader, were too strong for the brave Scots. Edward's knights, clad in armour, rode fiercely at the circles; while the famous English bowmen poured showers of arrows on their poorly armed

Before long, the rings of stubborn spearmen were broken, and there was nothing for them but flight. Wallace was now without an army, and for several years he was a wanderer. But he would not submit to Edward, who, in the end, offered a great reward to anyone who would give him up.

This happened at last, and the great patriot was taken to London to go through a form of trial. He was found guilty, and put to a cruel death. Edward thought, in this way, to strike terror into the hearts of the Scottish people.



The Wallace monument, Abbey Craig, Stirling

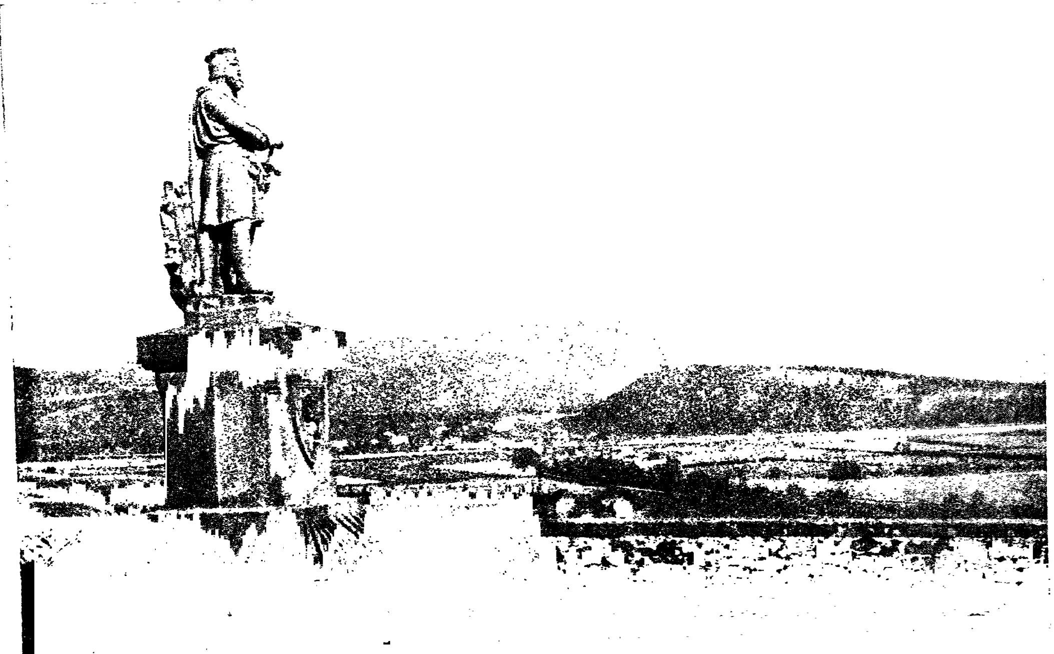
In this, however, he was mistaken. The noble acts of Wallace, useless though they seemed to have been, had stirred to life another great man, the famous Robert Bruce.

14. ROBERT BRUCE AND THE BLACK DOUGLAS

The cruel death of Sir William Wallace only made the Scots the more ready to fight for the freedom of their country. A few months later they crowned Robert Bruce, at Scone, the old crowning place of the Scottish kings.

Bruce belonged to the royal family of Scotland, and was, in every way, a great king. He was strong and brave, kind-hearted and true; and, although he had many hardships to undergo, he never lost heart.

By his royal master's side, in storm and sunshine, was "the Good lord Douglas"—or "the Black Douglas" as he was often called. No deed was too daring



The Bruce statue, looking towards the Wallace monument, Stirling

for him to attempt, and many are the stories related of him.

It was a good thing for king Bruce that Edward I did not live long enough to meet him in battle. Edward's young son, Edward II, was too fond of pleasure to carry on the war; and, in a few years, Bruce and his brave followers had won back all their towns, except Stirling.

Then the young English king roused himself from his life of ease, and led a splendid army into Scotland, only to be beaten in the great battle of Bannockburn. This, perhaps, was the greatest fight which ever took place on Scottish soil, and it is the one of which the Scots are most proud.

"Good king Robert" only lived a few years after his country became free, and, on his death bed, he sent for his old friend, Sir James Douglas, and many of his great lords.

He made them swear to be true to their country and to his little son, David, who would soon be their king. Then he called Douglas to his side, and said, "Sir

James, my dear friend, it has long been my wish to go and fight the enemies of the Cross, in the Holy Land. But, alas! I cannot go, and so, when I am dead, I want you to take my heart to the Holy City."



Dunfermline abbey

The good knight, with tears fast flowing down his cheeks, gave a solemn promise to do as his master wished. Soon after this, the hero king died, and his body was laid to rest in the old abbey of Dunfermline. His heart had been removed, embalmed and placed in a

silver casket, and it was entrusted to the loving care of Sir James.

We are told that he would not trust his precious burden away from his own person; so he hung it round his neck, by a string of silk and gold. Soon afterwards, with a band of brave knights, he set sail for the Holy Land.

On the way, he stopped to help the king of Spain, who was fighting against the Moors. These people were of the same race and religion as the Turks; so Douglas thought he was quite right in joining in the war against them.

In one of the battles, the band of Scots did some wonderful deeds; but they were not helped much by their Spanish friends.

It is said that Douglas then threw the silver casket into the midst of the foe, saying:—

"Forward, brave heart, as thou wert wont,
The battle host before,
Douglas will follow thee, or die,
To conquest, as of yore."

He then fought his way to where he

had thrown the heart, but soon fell, covered with wounds. When his body was found, the casket was lying beneath it, quite unharmed.

Then the rest of the little company carried their dead leader back to Scotland, to be buried with his fathers: as for the heart of Bruce, it was laid to rest in Melrose abbey.

Six hundred years have passed since Wallace, Bruce and Douglas did such mighty deeds for Scotland, but their names will ever be loved by all true-hearted Scots.

15. QUEEN PHILIPPA AND THE BRAVE MEN OF CALAIS

Just about the time when "the Good king Robert" lay dying, a famous young king, known as Edward III, began to reign over England. He gave up the idea of trying to conquer Scotland, and claimed the kingdom of France, which was a much larger and richer country.

So he took an army across the English Channel, and beat the French in the famous battle of Crecy. He then led his men towards the town of Calais, which is only about twenty miles from our own port of Dover. Calais was a very strong place, having thick walls and a deep ditch round it.

The king had little wooden huts made for his soldiers, stretching all the way round Calais; and, in front of the harbour, he placed ships full of armed men. Thus, you see, no one could pass through to help the men of Calais, or take food to them.

The king of France came with a large army to try to save the town; but a great marsh lay between him and the English. His troops could not cross this, and so the poor people in the town began to lose all hope of being saved from the enemy.

Nearly a year passed, and many of the people of Calais died of hunger. They had eaten the horses, the dogs, the cats and even the rats and mice. But now these were gone, and there was

nothing left for them but to give up their town to the English.

So, with hearts full of sorrow, they pulled down their own flag from the wall



The battle of Crecy

of the town, and put up the banner of England instead. When king Edward saw this, he sent his brave knight, Sir Walter Manny, who spoke over the wall to the governor of the town. The governor

asked that the people of Calais might go free, if they gave up their town to the English.

But Edward was very angry and said he would put all the people to death, unless six of the chief men came out to him, with ropes round their necks, bareheaded and with bare feet. In their hands they were to bring the keys of the town, and give up their own lives that the rest of the people might be spared.

When the governor heard this, he called a meeting of the townsmen in the market place. He then, amid loud weeping and cries of distress, gave them the stern message of the English king.

At last, one of the richest men stepped forward, and said, "I will give my life as a ransom for the rest." When he had spoken, five others promised to do likewise. So these six noble men, clad in nothing but their night-shirts, and with ropes round their necks, set out for the English camp.

When they reached king Edward's tent, they handed him the keys of the



Edward III

gates, and fell on their knees, praying for mercy. But the king looked sternly at them, and ordered them to be at once put to death. Then many of his brave knights, with Sir Walter Manny at their head, pleaded for the lives of these brave men; but Edward's only reply was, "Let the headsman be summoned."

At this trying moment, good queen Philippa fell at her husband's feet. "Gentle sire," said she, "I have crossed the sea, in great danger, to bring you good news. For our dear Lord's sake, spare the lives of these brave men."

The king, looking at her tenderly, said, "Ah! dame, I wish you had not been here. But I cannot refuse you anything, so take these men away, and do with them just as you please."

You may be sure that the good queen was delighted. She led the six brave men to her own tent, clothed them and gave them a good meal. Then, with rich presents in their hands, they returned to their homes, to tell the happy tidings to their friends and neighbours.

16. A MERRY YOUNG PRINCE, OR THE STORY OF "MADCAP HARRY"

Most of you will think "Madcap Harry" a strange nick-name for a prince—yet this was what one of our greatest kings was called, when a young man. He was so full of fun and mischief that all his friends thought the name suited him very well.

Everyone loved the gay young prince, who was very handsome and strong. He was very fond of all kinds of sport, and once, we are told, he and a friend caught a deer without the help of horses and dogs. At another time, he chased a fox until he caught it; and for a long while afterwards wore the fox's brush in his cap.

Once, the prince is said to have got into serious trouble. He heard that one of his friends had been taken before the judge, for some wrong thing he had done. Without thinking much of what he was

doing, prince Hal boldly entered the court, and ordered the judge to let his friend go free.

Now, although the judge knew that Hal was the king's eldest son, or prince of Wales, he was not afraid to do what he thought to be right. So he ordered the prince to be sent to prison, for not showing proper respect to one of the king's judges.

By this time, Hal could see he was wrong to have acted in such a rude way, and so he quietly obeyed the order of the judge. This story, if true, shows that the prince was not only a faithful friend, but also, that he had much good sense.

Now, his father, king Henry IV, was a cold, selfish and unhappy man, and could not understand the free and happy nature of his son; so, when he heard of prince Hal's wild doings, he was angry with him, and you may be sure that the prince soon heard of it.

But Hal really loved his father and wished to please him. You will think, however, that he showed this in a very

quaint way. He went to the king, wear-



Prince Henry and chief justice Gascoigne

ing a coat full of large button-holes. The

stitching of these holes was not quite finished; and, hanging from each hole, was the needle and silk with which it was worked.

Now, what do you think this meant? Very likely the king understood by it that his son was going to give up his idle ways, and settle down to the serious work expected of a prince.

We believe prince Hal did so: for we know that, before he was twenty, he had fought bravely against the king's foes, and helped to rule the country.

During the last few years of king Henry IV's life, he suffered from a terrible disease, and very often, too, he would fall into a kind of fit. While this lasted, he seemed like a dead man. One day, the prince entered his father's bed-room, and thought by his look that he must be dead.

On a cushion by the bedside was the crown. Perhaps prince Hal remembered that some of our kings had been robbed as they lay dying; so he removed the crown into the next room for safety.

Soon, however, the king opened his eyes, and at once saw what had happened. He thought that his son must be in a great hurry to be king, by taking away the crown. So he sent for the prince, and told him how grieved he was at what he had done.

However, the king was very pleased to find that his son still loved him, and did not wish him to die. Our great poet, Shakespeare, has told us, in some beautiful lines, how Henry then gave his son some very good advice, as to how he should rule the land when he became king.

In another book, you will read of our prince, when king Henry V, winning great battles in France, and how, for a short time, he ruled both that country and England.



17. THE STORY OF SIR RICHARD WHITTINGTON

Most of you have read of Dick Whittington and his cat—of the way in which a poor boy sold his pet cat for a large sum of money and was a rich man for the rest of his life. In this chapter, you will read what we believe to be the true story of Sir Richard Whittington.

In the reign of Edward III, there lived in the county of Gloucestershire a gentleman named Sir William Whittington. When he died, he left three sons, William, Robert and Richard. When the two elder brothers grew up to be men, each had an estate to live on; but there was very little left for the youngest.

Now Dick, as we may call him, had often heard his mother speak of a rich merchant, named Sir John Fitzwarren, who lived in the great city of London. She had known him when a boy, and, although she had not seen him for many years, still looked upon him as a friend.

So she sent a message to him, asking him if he would take her youngest son as an apprentice, to learn the trade of a mercer, for that was what Sir John was called. When, therefore, Dick's mother heard that her old friend was ready to take her boy, she felt pleased indeed.

Thus we find the lad, at the age of fourteen, setting out for the great city. We do not think he went alone. Very likely he travelled with a number of people for safety, as there were many robbers in those days, who were only too ready to rob lonely travellers.

On the journey, which would take four or five days, Dick would hear from his fellow travellers about the wonders of London. He would hear of the king and his court, of great feasts and merry-makings, of the ships in the river and of many other things, new and strange to a country lad.

But it is quite likely that, for a little while, Dick would feel lonely in his master's home. So we can very well fancy him saying, "I'll not stay here

any longer, but will go back to the old place."

We can imagine him getting up early, walking as fast as he could and then stopping to rest on Highgate hill. While sitting there, he could very well hear the bells of Bow church, in Cheapside, and, as they rang, they seemed to say, "Turn again, Whittington, Lord Mayor of London." He then resolved to go back, and do his best to make the message of the bells come true.

We feel sure that, during his seven years as an apprentice, his master would be very kind to him, and would see that he learnt his trade well. Dick would have to work hard; but, all through the year, there would be many things to amuse him, in his spare time. Sometimes, he would go with lads of his own age to a place named Moor-fields, where in winter there would be skating and sliding. When there was no frost, they could play at quarterstaff or football. In summer, there would be archery or wrestling for the 'prentice lads.



Bow church, Cheapside

Now, Dick's master, besides selling silks, satins and cloth of gold, often sent ships to countries far away to trade with the people there. Thus, the lad would get a chance to talk to sailors, who would tell him of the wonders of far-off lands.

Some people do not think there is any truth in the story of Dick's cat. But he may have had a cat, and may have sent it by one of the sailors, to a place where these animals were of great value. Then, with the money he got for it, he would start as a trader, like his master, and perhaps soon have a ship of his own. This he would very likely call "The Cat," in honour of the little animal which gave him a start in life.

Anyway, we know that, by the time he was thirty, Richard Whittington was a rich man. He *did* become mayor of London, holding that great office no less than three times. He was so rich that he lent king Henry V a very large sum of money, to pay his soldiers in the French wars.

While he was mayor for the third time, Whittington gave a great feast to the king and queen. Everything was of the best of its kind, and even the fires were made of cedar wood. Now, when Sir Richard lent the king money, he would get in return a written promise, or bond, saying that the money would be repaid.

Well, during this feast, Sir Richard threw the bond into the fire in the sight of the king and queen. This meant that he was making the king a present of the money. You may be sure this pleased king Henry very much, for he said, "Any king ought to be proud to have Sir Richard Whittington for a subject." To this, the polite knight replied, "Any subject ought to be proud of having such a king."

We also read, that Sir Richard married Alice, the daughter of his old master, and made many rich gifts to the city of London. He built schools for the young, almshouses for the old and hospitals for the sick.

18. KING JAMES I OF SCOTLAND AND BRAVE CATHERINE DOUGLAS

For hundreds of years after the time of Edward I the people of England and Scotland hated each other bitterly. Each tried to do the other an ill turn, whenever there was a chance to do so, even when the two countries were not at war.

This is very well seen in one of the acts of king Henry IV. He heard that prince James of Scotland was going to France, where he could be better taught than in his native country. So he sent an armed vessel, and captured the young prince, who was then brought as a prisoner to London.

When the Scottish king, who was very old and feeble, complained of this mean act, he was told that his son would be trained just as well in England as in France. A year after this, the prince became king with the title of James I;

but he remained a captive in England for eighteen years longer.



King James I of Scotland

You must not picture him as being unhappy during all these long years; for

he was treated with great kindness, and was taught everything that a king should know. We find that he was fond of books, music and playing tennis. He loved poetry, also, and could compose very good verses of his own.

In the garden of the palace where he lived, he often saw a beautiful young lady walking. The king fell in love with her, and told her of his love, in some very fine verses. She was Lady Jane Beaufort, cousin of king Henry V, and was fitted in every way to be a queen.

When king James returned to Scotland with his young queen, he found there was much work for him to do. The Scottish nobles were selfish and cruel, and did very much as they liked. The king made these men obey the laws; if they did not do so, they were sharply punished.

The common people loved James for being just, but the great men hated him. One of them, Sir Robert Graham, said that the king was a tyrant, and

that he would kill him if he had a chance to do so. For this, the bold man was banished to the Highlands.

Soon afterwards, the king and queen were staying at a monastery in the old city of Perth. It was Christmas time, and the long winter evenings were spent in reading, games and song. One night, the king was chatting with the queen and her ladies, when they heard a loud noise outside.

In the courtyard, they could see, by the glare of torches, a number of fierce-looking men. These proved to be Sir Robert Graham, and three hundred wild Highlanders.

The little party in the monastery ran at once to fasten the great door; but, to their dismay, they found that someone had taken away the bolts.

The king then tried to escape by one of the windows, but the iron bars were too strong for him to move. He then lifted up a plank in the floor, and got down into a kind of cellar below.

By this time, those in the room could

hear footsteps outside, coming up to the great door. Quick as thought, Catherine Douglas, one of the queen's ladies, thrust her arm through the staples, to act as a bolt. This gave the others time to cover up the flooring; but, as you may suppose, the fierce men soon burst open the door, breaking the noble lady's arm in doing so.

They then made a careful search through the house, but no trace of the king could be seen. Then, one of the men noticed that the floor had been disturbed—and thus the king's hiding-place was found out. These cruel out-laws then descended into the cellar and killed the king.

Most of the people of Scotland were very angry when they heard of his death. Those were rough times, and so we are not surprised to hear that, when the bold Graham was caught, he was put to a very cruel death.

As for Lady Catherine Douglas, she was ever afterwards known as Kate Bar-lass, in memory of her brave act.

19. QUEEN MARGARET AND THE ROBBER

Henry V, who was such a great soldier, died when quite a young man. His little son, who at the time was only a baby, then became king as Henry VI. When he grew up to be a man, it was quite clear to most people that he was not fitted to rule the country.

The great men, or nobles, needed a strong, firm king to keep them in order; and they thought very little of the gentle Henry, who, indeed, would have been better in a monastery, than on the throne. To make matters worse, he sometimes went out of his mind, and then someone had to rule the country in his stead.

This duty fell to the duke of York, who belonged to the royal family. Some of his friends thought he ought to be king instead of poor Henry. This led to a great quarrel between the king's friends, and the friends of the duke of York.

Shakespeare tells us that, one day, some nobles were walking in the Temple gardens in London. Among them were the duke of Somerset, a great friend of the king and queen, and the earl of Warwick, a friend of the duke of York.

They soon began to quarrel, and then the earl of Warwick, picking a white rose, said, "I choose this flower as my badge. All who love me will do the same." At this, the duke of Somerset plucked a red rose, and called upon his friends to do likewise.

Thus it was that, in the wars which followed, the king's side was known as the Red Rose party, while the followers of the duke of York called themselves the party of the White Rose.

The wars of the Roses, as they were called, led to a great deal of bloodshed. After one of the battles, it was settled that king Henry should rule while he lived, but that, after his death, the duke of York should reign. Now, queen Margaret, the wife of the king, would not hear of this for a moment, for she

wanted her little son, Edward, to reign after his father's death.



Henry VI

So the fighting went on again, but, in most of the battles, the king's party was

beaten. The queen was very brave, and she and her son were present at a fierce battle in the north of England. Her friends were beaten, and we are told that she fled into a thick wood, holding her son by the hand.

Now, the queen was richly dressed and was wearing some fine jewels. Before she had gone far, she met a band of robbers, who stole all her jewels, and what gold she had. But they could not settle how to divide the plunder, and began to quarrel over it.

Seeing this, queen Margaret and the little prince hurried away as quickly as they could, to a thicker part of the forest, where they thought the robbers would not find them. Soon, however, the poor queen had a great fright, for right in her path stood another fierce-looking man.

Now, I told you that Margaret was a brave woman, and, at this dreadful moment, she did just the right thing. She went straight up to the man, looked him calmly in the face, and said, "I am



The Tower

your queen, and this is the son of your king. Save him from the evil men who seek his life."

The man was touched by the queen's brave words, and promised to keep her and the prince from all harm. He then took them to a cave, where he gave them food and shelter. He also told the queen that he had fought on her side, and was hiding in the woods from the White Rose party.

Queen Margaret and her son remained in the cave for a few days, and then made their escape into Scotland.

Here the queen found a ship, which took her across to France. Her husband, king Henry, was at this time a prisoner in the Tower of London, and the son of the duke of York was reigning as Edward IV.

The rest of the story of the queen and her son is very sad. They stayed in France for a few years, and then returned to England to fight against king Edward IV.

Again, the queen's army was beaten,

and after the battle her brave son was killed by some of the king's friends. Poor Henry VI was found dead in the Tower about the same time, and most people thought that he had been put to death.

20. THE LITTLE PRINCES IN THE TOWER

You have already heard of the Tower of London—that gray old building overlooking the river Thames. Many sad stories have been told of the cruel deeds done within its walls; but there is none sadder than the story of little king Edward V, and his young brother, the duke of York.

Their father died when little Edward was about thirteen years of age. On his way to London, where he was to be crowned, the young king was seized by his uncle Richard, duke of Gloucester. This man was very cruel and crafty, and, though he tried to make

people think that he loved his nephew, had really made up his mind to be king himself.

The writers of the time have told us that the duke was deformed, and so went by the name of Richard Crookback. They also tell us that he had done many cruel murders; you can understand, then, how alarmed the queen was, when she knew that her eldest son was in his keeping.

So she set off, in great haste, with the rest of her children, to the church in Westminster. She thought that no harm would befall them there. Soon after this, Richard and little Edward V reached London, and in a short time the young king was sent to the Tower. His uncle said he was to wait there until he could be crowned, but Richard never meant this to take place.

After a while, Richard sent to the queen and told her that the little king was lonely, and wished to have his younger brother with him. At first, the queen would not part with her boy; but,

in the end, she let him go for his brother's



Richard III

sake. She felt very sad indeed, when

she thought of her two little boys, at the mercy of their false uncle, in the grim old Tower.

Now that the princes were in his power, their crafty uncle took a great deal of pains to get himself crowned king. One or two great men spoke up for the little captives in the Tower, but Richard III, as we may now speak of him, at once had these men beheaded. After this, no one dared to say a word, and the cruel king did as he pleased.

Still, he knew that he would never be quite safe while his nephews were alive. So, word was sent to the keeper of the Tower that the little princes were to be put to death. Now, the keeper had a kinder heart than the king, and refused to do this wicked deed.

He was then told that, on a certain day, he must give up the care of the Tower to another man. Of course, the keeper was forced to obey, as he was only the king's servant after all. So, a worse man took his place, and after that day no one ever saw the little princes alive.

Now you must know that these poor



Murder of the princes in the Tower

boys had only one room, and slept in the

same bed. That night, when everyone else was fast asleep, two bad men crept quietly up to the room where the young princes were. They found them fast asleep, locked in each others arms, and none but wicked men could have harmed them.

But these men had been well paid to do their wicked work, and so, taking some pillows, they pressed them down over the faces of the boys, until they were dead. Then, in great haste, they dug a deep hole, at the foot of the staircase, and there buried the bodies of the little princes.

As you may suppose, no one knew of this cruel deed except the king and those who had taken part in it. Most people thought that the princes had been murdered, but in what way they did not know.

About two hundred years afterwards, some workmen were digging in that part of the Tower, and found a box several feet under the floor. In it were the bones of what everyone believed to be the two young princes.

Their cruel uncle did not long wear the crown he had thus wickedly gained. Two years later, he was killed in the battle of Bosworth, which was the last battle of the wars of the Roses.

21. KING JAMES IV OF SCOTLAND AND THE BATTLE OF FLODDEN

About 400 years ago, king James IV was ruling in Scotland. The Scots were very proud of their king, who was said to be "of noble stature, and handsome as a man can be."

He loved to see his people take part in manly sports, and was sure to reward any man who showed much skill in them. We are told that, at some sports which were held at Edinburgh, the king gave the best man a spear, the head of which was made of pure gold.

But James loved more dangerous sport—the sport of war. At this time,

Henry VIII was king of England, and one of his sisters was married to the Scottish king. Yet this did not prevent war between the two countries ; for both monarchs wished to let all the world see how clever they could be in winning battles.

There had been peace between England and Scotland for some years, so king Henry thought he could safely take a great army across to France. He wished to win great battles there, as Edward III and Henry V had done.

Now, shortly after he landed in France, the queen of France wrote a letter to king James, asking him, as her own true knight, to lead an army into England. She thought that Henry would be forced to send back part of his army to fight the Scots—and, indeed, this really happened. The Scottish king could not refuse her request, and soon got ready for war.

Still, there were many fighting men left in England, and these, under the command of the earl of Surrey, marched

to the north. Queen Katharine sent standards and banners, and cheered the English soldiers with many brave words.

King James, at the head of a large army, had already crossed the river Tweed, and, after taking some strong castles, he pitched his camp on the hill of Flodden. At the foot of the hill flowed a river, crossed by a bridge. When the earl of Surrey drew near, he saw that he had not much chance of beating the Scots, while they remained in such a strong place.

So he ordered his men to cross over the bridge, and place themselves between the Scottish army and their native land. Now, it was at this point that king James made a very great mistake. You will remember what Wallace did, when the English were crossing the bridge over the Forth—how his men charged down the hill, and won a great victory.

Most people think that James should have done very much the same thing.

Instead of that, however, he allowed the entire English army to cross over, and draw up, in line of battle, behind him. Then he knew that he must fight.

Setting fire to his tents, he led his men down the hillside in deep silence. The thick smoke prevented the English from seeing their foes, until they were quite close to them.

In this fierce battle, king James proved himself a very brave man, but a poor general. He fought right in front, with his brave nobles all around him, but he knew very little of how the rest of his men were faring. They were suffering very much from the arrows of the English, whereas the king and his nobles were protected by their fine steel armour.

Night was now coming on, and the Scots were nearly surrounded by the English; but they still fought bravely, never thinking of flight. We are told that king James cut his way to within a few feet of the earl of Surrey, but was himself killed just at that moment.



Flodden field

Although their king was dead, the Scots still held the hill ; and it was only at daybreak that they began to retreat. They then found out how great was their loss. It is said that 10,000 Scots were killed, and that there was not a noble family in Scotland which had not cause to mourn over "Flodden's fatal field."

When the sad news reached Edinburgh, there was much weeping and sorrow, but the old men were quite ready to defend the city, should the English come. However, there was no need of this. The earl of Surrey had lost so many men that he did not think it wise to push on into Scotland. When you are older, you must read the very fine account of this battle which Sir Walter Scott gives, in a poem called *Marmion.*

22. MARY, QUEEN OF SCOTS

The story of Mary, queen of Scots, is known to nearly everyone. She became queen of Scotland when only a few



Queen Mary's bedroom, Holyrood palace

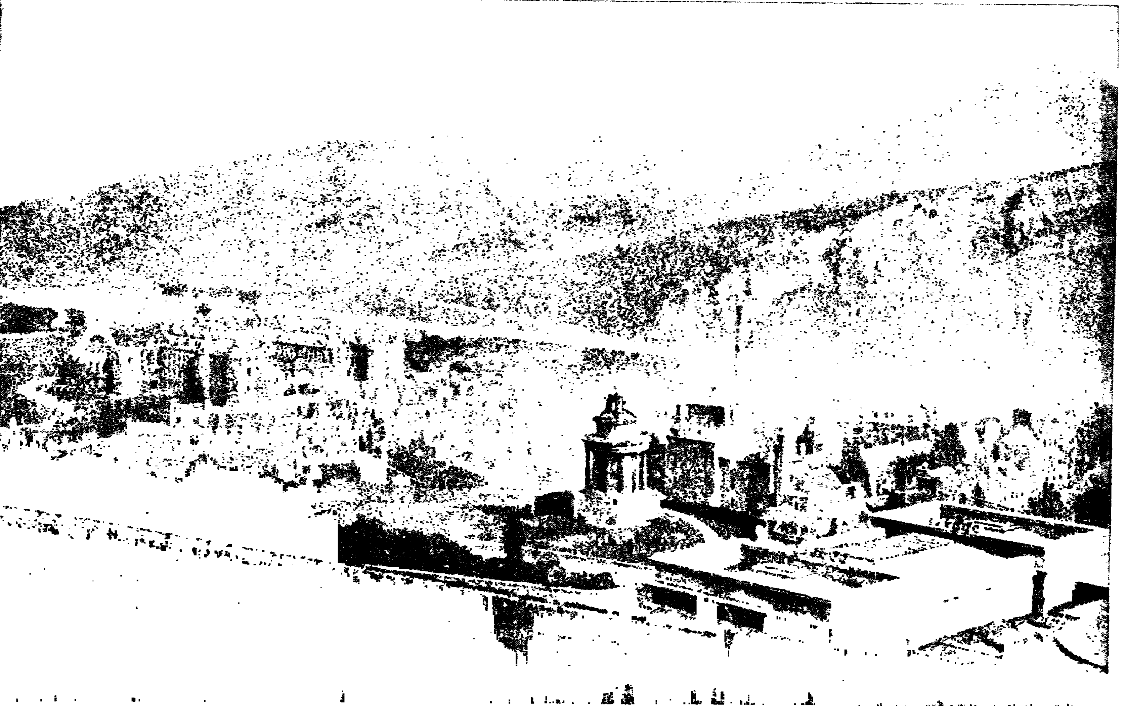
months old. Henry VIII was king of England at that time, and he thought it would be a very good plan if his young son, Edward, were to marry the little Scottish queen.

Now, the mother of the young queen was a French princess, and she thought it would be much better for her little daughter to marry a French prince. So Mary was sent to France when only seven years of age, and she lived there until she was eighteen.

Her life in France was very bright and gay. Everybody thought the young queen beautiful, witty and clever. She married her cousin, the young king of France, and so, for a time, was queen of two countries. Some of her friends told her to take the title of queen of England, too, and this she did.

This was not a wise thing to do, for it displeased our queen Elizabeth, and caused Mary much trouble in after years. She was not queen of France very long, for her husband died the next year; and Mary then left the land where she had been happy, to return to her native country.

Here, everything seemed very strange to her, and she missed the bright life of the French court very much. Many of



Holyrood palace. From the Calton hill, Edinburgh

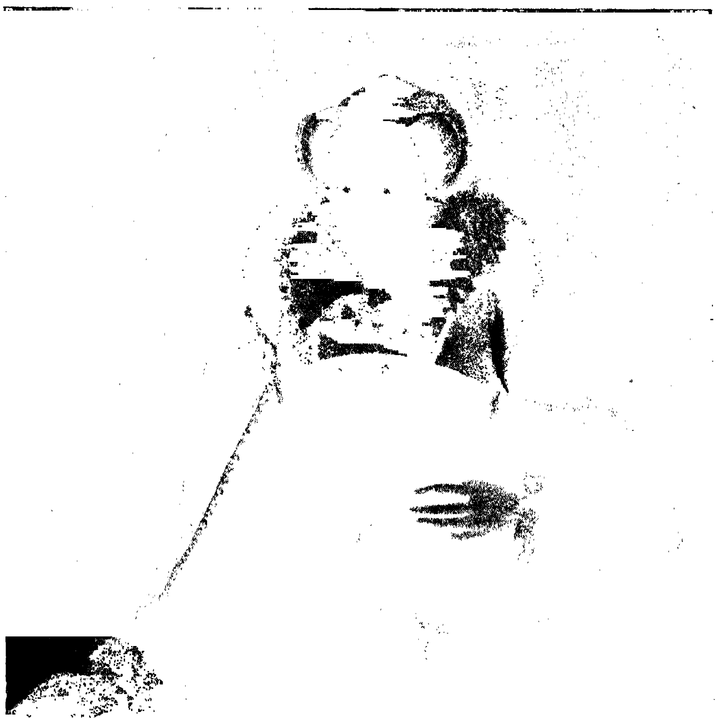
her people, too, did not agree with her about religion, and this made it hard for Mary to rule the land well. Still, most of her people loved her for her beauty and her kind heart.

A few years after queen Mary came back to Scotland, she married her cousin, lord Darnley; and, in the end, this led her into sad troubles. One night, some men who hated Darnley blew up his house with gunpowder; and, in the morning, his dead body was found lying in the gardens outside.

You will be surprised to hear that Mary did not punish the men who had done this deed. A little later, she went so far as to marry one of them. This turned the hearts of her people from her: they rose up in arms, and made her give up the crown to her infant son.

Mary was now shut up in a castle which stood on a small island in the middle of a lake. One day, her page managed to steal the keys of the castle, and so set his mistress free. He locked

the gate, flung the keys into the lake, and placed the queen in a boat which he had ready for her.



Mary, queen of Scots

Before long, she was at the head of a little army, and trying to get back her

crown once more. But her army was beaten, and she was forced to flee.

We are told that she rode sixty miles without stopping. Some of her friends begged her to find a ship which would take her to France. Instead of doing this, however, she crossed into England.

She very likely thought queen Elizabeth would help her to get back her throne, or allow her to cross over to France. Now, the English queen did not think it safe to let Mary do either of these things. So the unlucky queen of Scots was shut up in a castle, and for eighteen years she was moved from prison to prison.

Then some of her friends made a plot to set her free, and to put queen Elizabeth to death. It was found out, and the unhappy queen Mary was tried for her life. She said, over and over again, that she knew nothing about the plot for killing queen Elizabeth, but wished only to get back her freedom.

In the end, she was found guilty; and then, the chief men in the country

begged the English queen to sign the warrant for Mary's death. This was done at last, and the sad life of the queen of Scots came to an end, at the castle of Fotheringay.

23. THE STORY OF SIR PHILIP SIDNEY

This is a story of the days of queen Elizabeth, or "Good Queen Bess," as she is often called. When this great queen began her reign, England was weak, and in great danger from other nations: before she died, the country was strong and feared by all the world.

You will like to know how this came about. First of all, the queen, herself, though she had many faults, was very great and wise, and dearly loved her country. She thought of England, and her people, before everything else; and they, in their turn, thought there was no one in the world so great and clever as their queen.

Then, too, she had many great and famous men to help her. Some of these, like lord Burghley, helped her to govern the country; while others, like Sir Francis Drake and Sir Walter Ralegh, fought our enemies on land and sea. In queen Elizabeth's reign, too, lived our great poet, Shakespeare, who did much to give our country its name of "Merrie England."

One of the best men of that day was Sir Philip Sidney. He was so handsome and brave, and so polite in his manners, that Elizabeth said he was "the brightest jewel in her crown." He was a writer, too; and the queen and her ladies loved to read his poems.

We were not then friendly with Spain, the most powerful country in Europe. So, when queen Elizabeth knew that the Spanish king was ill-treating the people of Holland, she sent an army to help the Dutch, as the people there are called. One of the leaders of this army was Sir Philip Sidney.

One day, Sir Philip heard that the

Spaniards were sending a great quantity of food into a town that the English were trying to take. So, with about 500 brave soldiers, he set out to prevent this. On the way, a thick fog arose, and the English were unable to see where they were going. Before long, they found themselves in front of a great Spanish army of 5000 men.

However, our soldiers made the best of it, and, under their brave leader, fought so well that the Spaniards were beaten. Sir Philip Sidney was in the thickest of the fight, cheering on his men, but, before the battle was over, he was wounded in the leg, by a bullet.

After the battle, his friends helped him down from his horse, and a doctor tried to get the bullet out of the wound. This caused Sidney much pain, and loss of blood made him very thirsty. So his friends managed to get him some water to drink.

Just as he was raising the water to his lips, a poor dying soldier was carried past him. Sidney noticed that

the wounded man looked with longing eyes on the precious water.

Forgetting his own thirst, he handed the water to the poor soldier, saying, as he did so, "Take it, friend, for your need is greater than mine."

This noble man lived for several days afterwards, and, indeed, everyone thought at first that he would recover. The doctors, however, had not done their work well, and soon he knew that he was dying. But he met his death calmly and bravely, feeling that his life had been gentle and pure.

His body was brought to England, and buried with great state in Westminster abbey. All the country, from the queen on the throne, down to the poorest sqldier in her army, mourned for one who forgot his own pain, and gave comfort to a poor dying man.



Death of Sir Philip Sidney

24. THE LITTLE "REVENGE" OR, "ONE AGAINST FIFTY-THREE"

This is another story of the brave days of "Good Queen Bess," but, in this case, a great sailor, and not a soldier, is the hero of the tale.

The "sea-dogs," as we call the great seamen of that day, dearly loved to chase and sink great Spanish ships, and bring home to England their rich cargo of gold and silver.

So, when Sir Thomas Howard set out with six ships to meet a great Spanish treasure fleet, everyone was in high glee. One of the English ships was the little "Revenge," and Sir Richard Grenville, who commanded it, had struck many hard blows at the Dons, as the Spaniards were often called.

Soon, the ships of Spain came in sight; not, however, ships full of gold, but fifty-three great fighting vessels. Sir Thomas Howard thought it no disgrace for six

to run away from fifty-three; so he gave



Sir Richard Grenville

orders for his vessels to flee.

But Sir Richard Grenville had never fled from a Spaniard, and would not do so now. So he told his men to get ready for the fight—the fight of one against fifty-three. At first, as you may think, the Spaniards thought it quite a joke, but they soon found out their mistake.

This strange and wonderful battle began about three o'clock in the afternoon, and, when midnight came, the brave little ship and its crew were still unbeaten. The Spanish ships were so high that the shot from the big guns did but little harm to the brave "Revenge."

Its sails and masts, indeed, were shot away, but this did not matter to Sir Richard, who scorned the thought of flying. On the other hand, the great "San Philip" was hurt so much by the fire from the "Revenge," that it had to leave the fight.

Just as darkness was coming on, two Spanish ships sank. As for the others, many were shattered and so could fight no more. By this time, the powder and shot of the "Revenge" were running

short, but still its brave leader cried out to his men "Fight on! Fight on!"

Of the brave crew, forty were dead, and the sixty who were left were nearly all wounded. Grenville had been struck by a bullet; his little vessel could scarcely keep afloat; but he was as brave as ever. If he could not win, he was too proud to fly.

He even sent for the gunner, and told him to sink the ship; for, said he, "It is better to fall into the hands of God than into the hands of Spain."

But now his men came to him, and begged him to give in; for, said they, "We have children, we have wives, and, if we yield now, the Spaniards will let us go, and we can fight them another time." So, at last, Sir Richard Grenville gave way, and, sorely wounded, he was taken on board the Spanish flag-ship.

Here, the stately Spanish men came round him as he lay dying at the foot of the mast, and they praised him to his face. They thought it a glory to have fought with such a brave man. At the

last moment, he raised himself, and, in a clear voice, said,

"I have fought for Queen and Faith,
Like a valiant man and true,
I have only done my duty,
As a man is bound to do,
With a joyful spirit, I,
Sir Richard Grenville, die."

Then, to the great grief of both friend and foe, he "fell upon the deck and died." And what of the little "Revenge"? Two hundred Spanish seamen were sent on board, but a great storm arose in which the little vessel was lost.

Thus, like its brave master, the little "Revenge" could not remain a slave to Spain; and, surely, no Briton will ever forget the brave story of Sir Richard Grenville—or the fight of "one against fifty-three."

25. KING CHARLES I AND HIS CHILDREN

When you are older, and go on a visit to the great city of London, you will, perhaps, be taken to the National Gallery, where there are pictures painted by the greatest artists in the world.

One of them shows you a noble looking man, seated on a fine horse. You will be told that this is a portrait of king Charles I, who, like his father, James I, ruled over both England and Scotland. You will be sorry to hear that this kingly looking man had a very unhappy reign, and came to a sad end.

For several years there had been many quarrels between the king and his people. Many of them thought that Charles wished to rob them of their freedom, dear to every Briton. The king felt that they wanted him to be king only in name, and to take away most of his power.

So, at last, war broke out between

the king's friends, who were called Cavaliers, and the party who thought that the king was in the wrong. These were known as Roundheads, because their hair was cut short. The king's men rode on horses, wore their hair very long, and dressed in fine style.

Now, you must know that king Charles had three sons and four daughters. When the fighting began, the queen went to France, taking with her Charles and James, the two eldest sons, and three of the princesses. But, somehow or other, the little princess Elizabeth, who was about seven years old, and her baby brother, prince Henry, were left behind.

The little princess never saw her brothers and sisters again; and, during the seven years that the war lasted, these two poor children saw their father only two or three times.

In the end, the king was beaten, and fell into the hands of his enemies. They and their leader, Oliver Cromwell, then brought him to trial; and, although

Charles said they had no right to try



Charles I with his children

him, the court said that he was to be put to death.

The day before the king was to die, his two children went to see him for the last time. Charles had always been fond of them, and so you can think what a sad meeting it was. The little princess, who was now about thirteen years old, wrote her father's last words in a book, and also a list of good books, which she was to read.

The king then took his little son, Henry, on his knee, and said to him, "They will cut off your father's head, and, perhaps, make you a king. Now, you must not be a king so long as your brothers, Charles and James, are alive."

To this, the brave little prince replied, "I will be cut in pieces first." After the king had kissed his children and given them his blessing, there came the sad parting.

The next day, king Charles was taken in front of his own palace, at Whitehall, where a scaffold had been set up. Stern soldiers guarded the way, and thousands of people filled the streets near. The king showed no fear at the

last; and, when his head was struck off, a deep groan rose from the crowd.

Soon after this sad event, princess Elizabeth was sent to a castle in the Isle of Wight. Her father had been a prisoner there, some time before his



Carisbrooke castle gateway

death; so it was not a very happy place for the poor little princess to live in.

She was never well after this, indeed, she soon grew worse. One day, she was found sitting in her room, quite dead. Her cheek was resting on the open Bible,

which her father had given her, and there is no doubt that the last hours of her sad little life were spent in reading the best of books. Her little brother was sent across the sea to his mother, after two years had passed.

Our good queen Victoria, who died a few years ago, was deeply touched by the sad story of this little Stewart princess. So she had a beautiful monument set up to her memory, near the spot where she died. It is the figure of a young girl with her cheek resting on an open Bible. There are some lines beneath, telling of the brave way in which the little princess bore her troubles.

26. THE STORY OF MONTROSE, OR "THE GREAT MARQUIS"

In the last chapter we saw how the Cavaliers fought the Roundheads, in the great civil war. Just at the time when all seemed so dark for the king's

party in England, a bright ray of hope



The marquis of Montrose

shone forth, far away in the north of Scotland.

The people in the south of Scotland were now helping the king's foes; but a brave nobleman, James Graham, marquis of Montrose, thought he could raise an army in the Highlands, to fight for king Charles.

So he sent the fiery cross through the Highland glens to summon all to battle, and in a few days three thousand brave Highlanders were marching beneath his banner.

Montrose, clad in tartan and kilt, led them against the old city of Perth. When the people there heard of his coming, they came out in great numbers, to give him battle.

But they were no match for Montrose and his men. With wild cries, the Highlanders rushed to the fight, and soon the field was won; for no one could stand against their great two-handed swords. Perth was taken, and, before a year had passed, other towns were won.

In this short time, "the Great Marquis" won six battles, and was able to leave

the Highlands and attack the Lowlands. The two cities of Edinburgh and Glasgow were taken, and Montrose sent a message to king Charles, that he hoped soon to bring an army of 20,000 men to help him.

Now, this was more than he could do, for his Highland men did not like fighting far away from their homes. So, many of them left their great leader, and, at a place named Philiphaugh, he was beaten by general Leslie.

He was now without an army, and was forced to leave Scotland. He was away for some years, and it was during this time that king Charles was put to death. Many of the Scots did not approve of this, and so they asked his son to cross the seas and be crowned as Charles II.

Now, the brave Montrose was just as ready to fight for the new king, as he had been for his father. So he got an army together, but the ships in which they sailed were scattered by a storm. Thus, when he reached Scotland, he

had scarcely a thousand men behind him.

Once more he tried the Highlands. Before him floated a banner, on which was a picture of the bleeding head of king Charles I, and underneath were these words, "Judge and avenge my cause, O Lord!" In spite of this appeal, only a few men joined him, and in a short time he was surrounded by the soldiers of general Leslie.

He managed to escape, by swimming his horse across a river, and then disguising himself as a peasant. For some time he wandered about, but was at last betrayed and given up to his enemies.

They treated him very badly, making him ride on a poor old horse, without a saddle, and with his feet tied together under its body. He bore these insults with great patience, and so won the hearts of many who had hated him.

Montrose was taken to Edinburgh, where he was tried and condemned to be hanged. This was thought to be a shameful way for a great nobleman to

die; and, indeed, his enemies behaved very meanly to their fallen foe.

Still, he bore these troubles with such a calm and brave spirit, that many in the crowd felt great pity for him. Even the rough hangman shed tears when the moment came to place the rope round the neck of the brave Montrose.

A few years ago, some admirers of this noble man set up a monument to his memory in the church of St Giles, Edinburgh. It is the figure of a knight, clad in armour, with his sword lying on his breast, the whole being carved in fine white marble.

27. KING CHARLES II AND "THE ROYAL OAK"

Soon after the death of "the Great Marquis," prince Charles crossed over from Holland to Scotland. The Scots were quite ready to crown him king, if he would only worship God in the way

they thought best. Charles did not like their form of worship very much; but, as he had made up his mind to be king, he gave them the promise they wanted.

A fine army, under the careful and wise general Leslie, was now ready to fight for the young king. But things soon began to turn out badly for Charles; for that great soldier, Oliver Cromwell, led his famous soldiers against Leslie, and beat him at the battle of Dunbar.

Then Charles led his army into England, but, by the time he reached the city of Worcester, Cromwell and his army overtook him. A fierce fight took place, partly in the city itself, and partly outside it; and again the king's army was beaten, for no troops could withstand the famous Ironsides of Cromwell's army.

Charles II was now a wanderer, as his army was quite scattered. He was in great danger of being caught, for Cromwell offered a thousand pounds to anyone who would give the king into his hands.

In all the country round, Cromwell's



Charles II

soldiers were in search of Charles Stewart; and many were the escapes he had.

Of course, the first thing he did, was to disguise himself. So he cut off his long hair, and put on the dress of a countryman.

He stayed at the house of some poor woodcutters, named Penderell, and, although they knew him to be the king, they would have died, rather than have betrayed him. Once, when they thought the soldiers were coming to search their house, they sent Charles into a thick wood close by, where he climbed up into an oak-tree.

Here he stayed all day, and, from his leafy hiding-place, he saw the Roundhead soldiers looking for him on all sides. They little thought how near they were to the king.

At night, when all the soldiers were gone, Charles was taken by Richard Penderell to the house of a gentleman named Lane. This gentleman had a sister who was travelling to the port of Bristol, in the west of England. Now Charles wished to find a ship which would take him to France.



The Royal Oak at Boscobel

So it was settled that he should go as the lady's servant, and soon he was on horseback, with his supposed mistress behind him, for that was the way in which ladies travelled in those days. At last, Bristol was reached, but there was no ship ready to sail from that port.

So the king left Bristol, and, with one or two faithful friends, pushed on until he reached Brighton, then only a little seaside village. Here a ship was found, and, in a very short time, king Charles had joined his mother and friends in France. For several years, there was no king in Britain, and the country was ruled by Oliver Cromwell. When he died, nearly everyone in our island wanted Charles to return. This he was delighted to do; and, on a fine day in May, in the year 1660, he landed at Dover.

The people were mad with joy, to know that the king had got his own again. The church bells rang, bonfires blazed, the fountains ran with wine, and

crowds cheered the king, as he drove in his fine coach to London.

"Really," said king Charles, who was very witty, "I have been very foolish not to come back sooner, for everyone seems very glad to see me."

He entered London on 29 May, which was also his birthday. For 250 years this day has been called "Royal Oak" day, or "Oak Apple" day, to remind us of the way in which the king hid from his enemies. In country places, most boys and girls wear sprigs of oak on Oak Apple day.

28. THE GREAT FIRE OF LONDON

When Charles II had been on the throne about five years, two sad troubles befell the city of London. The first of these was an awful disease called the plague, which killed thousands of people, during the spring and summer of the year 1665.

In those times, people were not very careful to keep their houses and streets clean; and dirt, as perhaps you know, is a great cause of disease. Neither did they know the best way to stop a disease like the plague, after it had broken out, and thus much sorrow and trouble were caused.

While the great plague lasted, London was a very dreadful place in which to live. The once busy streets were now silent, and almost empty; the dead were buried in great pits, like dogs; and many people fled from the city into the country.

At last the plague stopped, and, in a few months, London was itself again. Then, one night in September, 1666, a fire broke out in a baker's shop, standing in a place known as Pudding Lane, not far from London Bridge. This shop was built of wood, and its roof was coated with pitch, so you can see that it would burn very fiercely.

Most of the other houses near were also built of wood, and the flames from the burning shop were blown towards them



The Great Fire of London

by a strong east wind. Soon, many houses were in flames: not only those on the same side of the street, but those on the other side also.

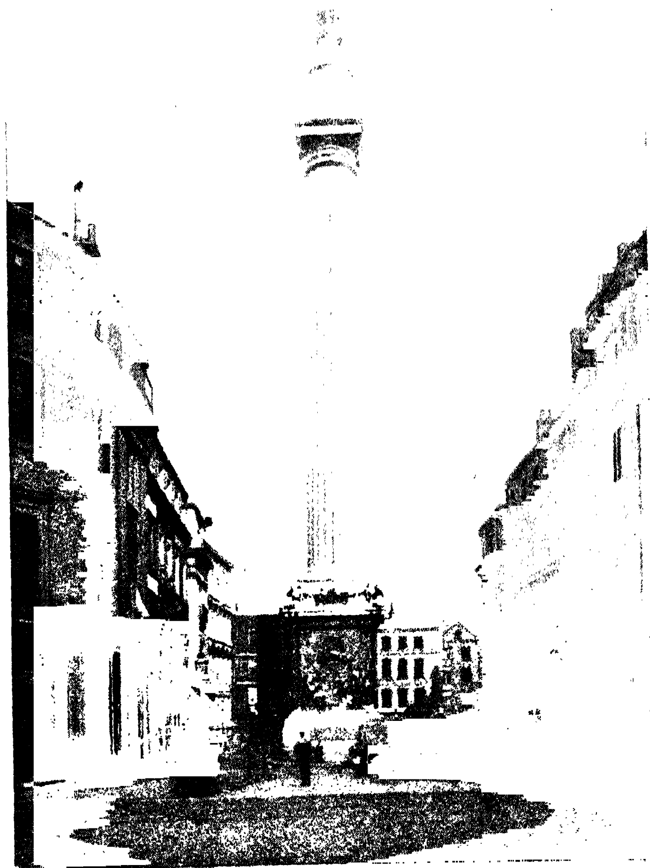
This was because the streets were so narrow, that the flames could leap across them quite easily.

Soon, large warehouses, filled with such things as pitch, tar and resin, were on fire; and, as there were no fire engines at that time, there was not much hope of putting out such a large fire, in the usual way. The people, too, seemed to have lost their senses, and very little was done to stop the flames from spreading.

When night came, the city was as bright as day, and the glare lit up the country for ten miles around London. By the next day, St Paul's cathedral was burning, and the molten lead from its great roof flowed down the streets in streams.

People living near the river Thames crowded what goods they could save into boats and barges; while hundreds of carts and wagons carried still more

into the fields lying round the city. Here,



The Monument

thousands of poor people could be seen,

some living in tents which they had put up, and others lying on the bare ground.

By this time, the greater part of the city had been burned to ashes, and it seemed that the king's palace at Whitehall, and Westminster abbey, too, would be destroyed. At this point, many houses were purposely blown up by gunpowder, thus making great gaps, which the flames could not easily cross.

So the fire was at last stayed; but London was a city of ruins. Thirteen thousand houses, and eighty-nine churches are said to have been burnt down; and thousands of rich people were now poor, having lost everything by the fire.

King Charles, who generally thought only of his own comfort, behaved very well at this time. He helped to blow up the houses, which, as you have just read, put an end to the fire; and he also sent food and money to the people who had lost their homes.

You will be surprised to learn, that, in the end, the Great Fire was a good

thing for the city of London. When London was built again, most of the houses were of brick or stone, and the streets were made much wider than before.

Sir Christopher Wren, a great architect, rebuilt St Paul's as we see it to-day, and no less than 36 of the 53 new churches which arose in the city.

It is thought, too, that the fire burnt out all traces of the great plague, and London, which, in the old days, had a great deal of sickness, is now a very healthy place.

Two things about the Great Fire you can easily remember: it began at Pudding Lane, and ended at Pie Corner. Near the spot where it began, stands a very tall column, known as the Monument. From the top of it, the whole of London may easily be seen. The Monument was built by Wren in memory of the greatest fire which London ever had.

29. HOW THE 'PRENTICES SHUT THE GATES, OR THE STORY OF LONDONDERRY

When Charles II, the "Merry Monarch," died, his brother James succeeded him. After ruling the country very badly for three years, he was forced to flee to France. James had tried to alter the religion of the land, and so his son-in-law, William, prince of Orange, was invited to become king in his stead.

Now, most of the Irish people thought as James did, in matters of religion; and so, after a while, James set sail for Dublin, the capital of Ireland, and there the Irish gave him a very joyful welcome.

But the people of Londonderry, in the north of Ireland, looked upon William as their king. The governor of this town was a friend of James, and he told him that, if some soldiers were sent, the town should be given up to them.

The people of Londonderry found out this base plot just in time to stop



Londonderry

it; and, when the soldiers of king James appeared, thirteen bold "'prentice" lads shut the gates in their faces.

The governor now fled from the city; but two brave men—one, a soldier, named major Baker, the other, a clergyman, George Walker—were chosen governors in his place.

Walker was a fine speaker, and his burning words so roused the people that they flew to defend the walls of their town. Now, these walls were not very strong, and there was not much food in the town, so king James and his generals thought it would be a very easy matter to take the place. But in this they were greatly mistaken, for the 7000 men in Londonderry were the bravest in the land.

They soon put cannon in all the weak places on the wall, and sentries kept watch both night and day. So little, too, did they care for the enemy, that, several times, they dashed out of the gates, and fought them. In one of these sharp fights, they killed a general and a great many men.

Then the king's army made an attack on the walls and gates, only to be beaten back after losing many of their troops. We are told that the women in the town helped their husbands and brothers in this fight, for they even loaded the guns, and took food to the brave men on the wall.

It was now plain that the town was not to be taken in this way. So the army outside tried to prevent any food or arms from reaching the brave defenders, for they knew that, if this could be done, the town would be forced to give in at last.

To make sure of this, they built a "boom" across the river Foyle, which was to keep ships from bringing food into the town. This boom was made of trunks of trees, bound tightly together by strong chains, and it stretched right across the river.

Before long, there was no meat left, except horseflesh, and not much of that. Dogs, cats and even rats and mice were eaten by the starving people, but their cry was still "No surrender!" Fever

now broke out among them, and brave major Baker and many others died of it.

One day, a watchman on the wall saw some ships coming up the river Foyle. How glad the people were, when they found out that these vessels were bringing them food! But, alas! their troubles were not yet over; for the commander of the little fleet did not try to break through the boom.

For six long weeks he remained in sight of the poor starving people, and during all that time did nothing to help them. At last, a stern message came from king William that he must try to force the boom.

One of the ships was called the "Mountjoy," and its master had lived in Londonderry all his life. So he begged that his ship might lead the way; for he wished to be the first to bring help to his fellow townsmen.

His wish was granted, and straight at the boom went the brave little "Mountjoy." The shock made the vessel go over on its side in the low water, but the next

ship cleared a way for itself through the broken boom. When the tide rose, the "Mountjoy" floated again, and also passed through; but, sad to say, its brave master was killed just at that moment by a cannon ball.

You can imagine the joy of the people in Londonderry when the ships unloaded their casks of beef, great cheeses, kegs of butter, flitches of bacon and sacks of biscuits. That night, the bells rang out from all the churches, while, amid their joyous peals, could still be heard the booming of the cannon outside.

Thus, Londonderry was saved; and. two days later, the enemy pulled down their tents and marched away. The siege had lasted 105 days, and during that dreadful time more than half the people had died.

30. "BONNIE PRINCE CHARLIE"

Soon after Londonderry was saved, James II left Ireland and returned to France, where he died a few years later. But, for many years afterwards, there were people in Britain who wished that the Stewarts would come back again.

So, when prince Charles Edward, the grandson of James, landed in the north of Scotland, to win back the throne of his fathers, he met with a hearty welcome from the brave Highlanders. Everybody loved the handsome young prince, with his bright, winning ways; and soon, several thousand men were marching to Edinburgh, wearing the badge of the white cockade.

He entered the city, and went to the old palace of Holyrood; but in a few days was forced to march out and fight the army of king George II, which was led by Sir John Cope. A wild rush of the Highlanders soon put to flight the

king's troops; in fact, the battle was over in about ten minutes.

The prince was soon joined by more men, and he thought his best plan now was to march southward. So the Border was crossed, and, in a short time, the town of Derby was reached, which was only a little more than a hundred miles from London.

Prince Charlie had expected many of the English to join him, but very few did so. As his little army passed through the chief towns, the people came out to see the strange sight, but that was all.

So, when his friends said his army was not strong enough to go forward, the prince, with a sad heart, gave the order to retreat.

This was done; and, after many weary weeks of marching, he drew up his little army on Culloden Moor, in the far north of Scotland. Soon, the army of king George, led by his son, the duke of Cumberland, came up.

Prince Charlie's men were tired and hungry, but, in spite of this, they fought very bravely. They broke through the

front rank of the duke's army, only to find another rank drawn up, waiting for them with loaded guns.

The fire from these killed hundreds of the Highlanders, and very soon the battle was over. The duke of Cumberland's army behaved very cruelly to their flying foes; wounded men were killed where they lay; and a barn, where a number of men had taken shelter, was burned to the ground.

For weeks afterwards, parties of the duke's men went about, burning houses and castles, and turning the country into a desert. Men were shot like wild beasts, while women and children were turned out to starve.

During this sad time, prince Charlie was hiding as best he could. The great sum of £30,000 was offered to anyone who would give him up to the king's men; but these poor Highlanders were so true to their bonnie prince that no one claimed the money.

For months, he wandered about among the hills and glens, sometimes spending the night in a poor hut, some-

times on the bleak moors. At one time, he was hiding on a small island off the west coast of Scotland, and, when the king's soldiers heard this, orders were given that no one was to leave the island without a passport.



Cumberland Stone, Culloden Moor

Then, a brave young lady, Flora Macdonald, the daughter of a chieftain, came to his help. She dressed the prince as a maid servant, and called him "Betty Burke." She then boldly asked for a passport for herself, her manservant and "Betty," and crossed over in

safety to her home in the island of Skye.

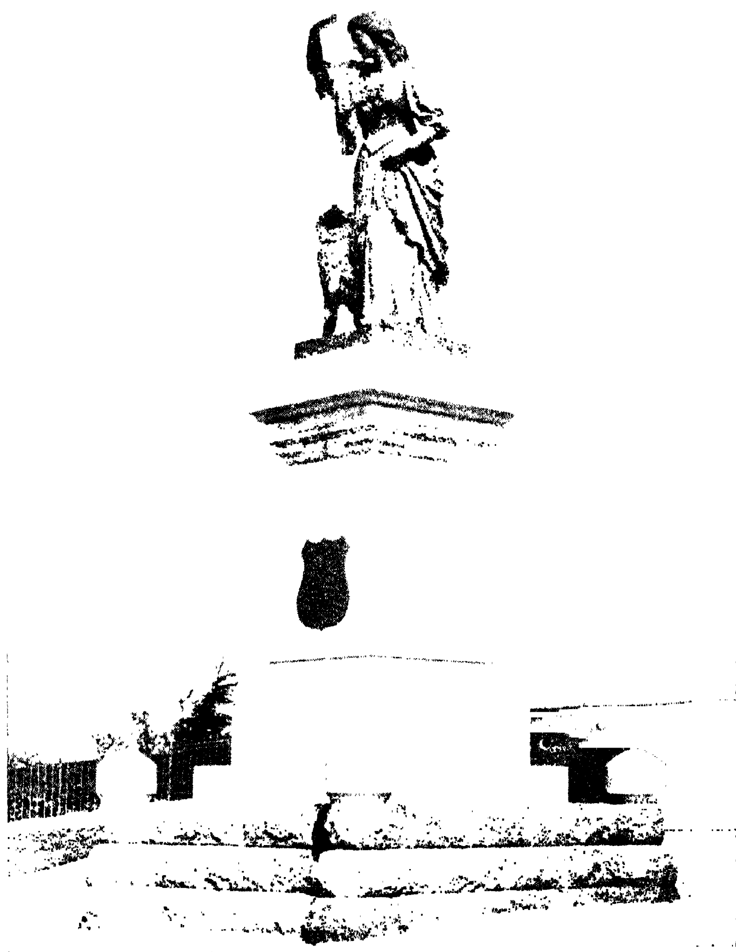
Very strange prince Charlie must have looked, for he was a tall man, and he would feel very awkward in a woman's dress. It is said that he was nearly found out by the long steps which he took.

Then, for a few weeks, he lived in a cave with some outlaws, who were very kind to him. They managed to get the prince some fresh clothes, and two of them acted as his guides.

At last, five months after the battle of Culloden, his friends found a ship, which took him safely across to France. One of the last to say good-bye to him was brave Flora Macdonald, who had done much to help him to escape.

Many Scottish songs are full of the praises of "Bonnie prince Charlie." How he was loved is well shown in the following verse:

"Bonnie Charlie's now awa',
Safely o'er the friendly main;
Many a heart will break in twa,
Should he ne'er come back again."



The Flora Macdonald statue at Inverness

Prince Charlie never returned, and when he died, forty years later, few would have known him as the "King of the Highland hearts, Bonnie Prince Charlie."

31. HOW INDIA WAS WON, OR THE STORY OF ROBERT CLIVE

Most of you have heard of a great country named India. The many millions of people there look upon king George as their emperor; and for more than a hundred years India has been a part of the great British empire.

How is it, that this vast country, thousands of miles away, should be ruled by the British race, whose island home seems such a small spot on the map of the world? The story of Robert Clive will help to show us how this came to pass.

This great man lived when George II was king. The people of the little town of Market Drayton, in Shropshire, where

he was born, had never before seen such a bold, daring lad, as Robert Clive. He was always the leader of the other boys when any mischief was being done; and



Lord Clive

he loved to do things which other boys dared not do.

One day, he climbed up the steeple of the church, and sat on a stone spout near the top. Everyone thought he

would fall and be killed, but the daring lad only looked upon it as fun.

He went from school to school, learning very little, and getting into all sorts of scrapes wherever he went. So, when he was about seventeen years of age, his father was very glad to get him a clerk's place, in far-away India.

Now, British merchants had been trading with India for many years, and so had French and Dutch; but none of them owned much land there.

The East India Company, as our traders were known, had three towns to which our goods might be sent, and exchanged for Indian articles.

One of these places was Madras, and it was there that young Robert Clive was sent. The life of a clerk was not a suitable one for a bold, young fellow, who liked to be in the open air all day long: so we find that, at first, he was very dull and sad. Soon, however, a great change came.

It happened in this way. The French, at this time, were trying to get all the

power in that part of India, and to drive out the British. To spoil their plans, Clive said that an army should be sent to take the town of Arcot.

The governor thought this very good advice, and sent Clive himself, at the head of a little army of 200 white men and 300 sepoys, or native Indian soldiers. With this little army, Clive marched to Arcot, and when the people in the town saw him coming they fled in sudden fear, leaving the place in his hands.

After a time, they thought they had been rather foolish, and came back in thousands to take the town. Now, Arcot was not a strong place, for the walls were low and broken in some parts; but, in spite of all this, Clive kept it for 50 days against the attack of a big army.

At the end of this time, the enemy gave up the siege, and marched away. Soon, everyone in India was talking of the young clerk, who had shown greater skill in war than generals who had spent all their lives in fighting.

Some years later, news came to

Madras of a cruel deed that had been done at Calcutta, another of our trading stations. A young native prince, who hated the British, had suddenly marched against the town, and taken it. He then shut up 146 white people in a small room, which had only one small window in it.

These poor people thought their guards were joking when they were told to enter this room, but they soon found out their mistake. They were driven in at the point of the sword.

During the hot night, the poor captives cried for mercy, and offered large sums of money to have the door opened. But their cruel jailers only laughed at their sufferings, and soon most of the prisoners were dead.

In the morning, only 23 persons staggered out of that dreadful place alive, and ever since it has been spoken of as the "Black Hole" of Calcutta. Clive was sent with an army of 3000 men to punish the prince, or nabob, who had ordered this cruel deed to take place.

When he reached Calcutta, Clive found that the nabob was at the head of 50,000 men. Clive's friends said it would not be wise for their little army to attack another so large, but, in the end, Clive gave the order to fight.

The battle began, and before long the big army was beaten, and the great victory of Plassey was won. Soon, a great part of India came under our rule, and Robert Clive went back to his native country, a famous man.

The title of Lord Clive was given him, and his father and friends were now quite proud of him. Still, he was not happy, for he suffered a great deal from illness; and some men, who were jealous of him, said he had done some wrong deeds in India.

They even brought him to trial; but the judges said he had done wonderful things for Britain, and so he left the court with honour. But, sad to say, he could not forget the cruel treatment he had had from his enemies, and, at last, he took his own life.

32. THE STORY OF CAPTAIN COOK

This is the story of a poor boy, who, by hard work and the good use of his brains, became one of Britain's greatest sailors.

James Cook was born at Marton, a little village in north Yorkshire, nearly 200 years ago. His father was only a poor labourer, who worked on a farm; and his little son, James, when only eight years old, was sent into the fields to scare the birds, and to make himself useful in other ways.

His master's wife, seeing that he was a bright little fellow, taught him his letters; and, later, a gentleman paid for him to be sent to the village school. When about thirteen, he became an apprentice in a grocer's shop, in a little seaport town, not far from his home.

Here he would often talk with sailors, who would tell him of voyages to the

Arctic seas in search of whales; of days



Captain Cook

and nights spent on the stormy North sea, fishing for cod and herring; and so

the sounds and sights of the great sea would be ever before him.

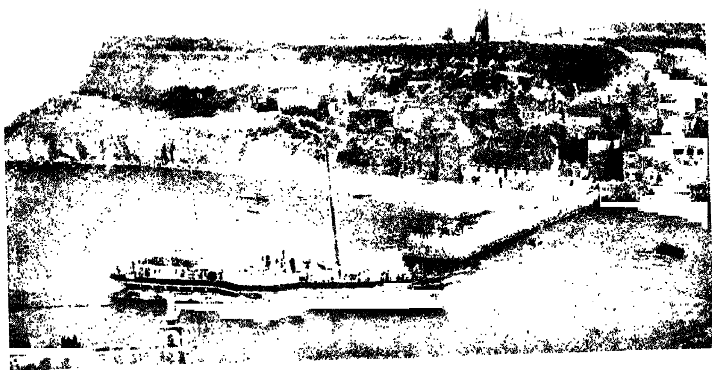
One day, he left the shop, and walked across the moors to the town of Whitby. In the harbour lay a ship, which was just about to set sail. Cook went on board, and begged to be taken with the captain, if only as the ship's boy.

The captain did so, and the young lad was so ready to learn that, by the time he was twenty-four, he had become the ship's mate, that is, he stood next to the captain.

During these years he learnt about all the parts of a ship and its rigging; how to sail and steer the vessel, and how to save it in time of danger. He was fitting himself for the great work which he had to do later in life.

Three years after this he joined the navy, and here, too, he got on just as quickly as when on a merchant ship. This was because he was always working and studying, for he did not waste his time, as many of his fellow seamen did.

Soon, he became master of a ship, and was sent to North America to make charts, or maps, of part of the sea there. So well did he do this, that a greater piece of work was given him in another part of the world.



Whitby harbour

This was to explore the great Pacific ocean. Very little was known about it at that time, although ships had sailed across it for hundreds of years.

In his ship, the "Endeavour," captain Cook sailed round New Zealand. He

proved, what no one knew before, that there were two large islands there. From New Zealand, he sailed on, until he came to Australia—the largest island in the world.

Other sailors had been there before his time, but had made no maps or charts. So it was almost an unknown land. Captain Cook, however, sailed all along the east coast, made a very careful chart of it, and wrote about the people, plants and animals he found there.

So pleased was king George III when Cook returned home, that the captain was sent out again in command of two ships. He was to try to find a great continent, which was thought to be lying far away to the south.

For months, the ships sailed among icebergs and floating ice, until they could get no further; but no southern continent could be found. He discovered other places in the Pacific during the voyage, and when he reached home again great honours were given him.

It was not very long before captain

Cook started on his third and last voyage. This time, he was sent to find a new way to India, called the North-West passage, and again his way lay amid icebergs and bitter cold.

He went farther north than anyone had been before; but, after a time, he sailed back to some beautiful islands in the Pacific, to get water, fruit and food. These were known as the Sandwich islands. Here, Cook was well known, for he had discovered these islands on his first voyage. The natives were pleased to see him, and supplied him with most of the things he wanted.

But, sad to say, he lost his life there; and a very simple thing was the cause of it. One night, some natives swam out to his ship, and stole a boat. Next morning, captain Cook went ashore to find out who had taken it.

The chief of the island said he knew nothing about it, and this made the captain very angry. So he said he would take the chief back to his ship, and keep him there, till the boat was found.

Thinking their chief would be killed, the natives came down to the beach, armed with spears and knives. Some of Cook's men fired on them, and then one of the islanders killed the captain, who was still on the beach, with a spear.

33. THE STORY OF NELSON, THE HERO OF THE NAVY

PART I

In our "rough, island story" it is hard to find a greater name than that of Nelson; for it has been truly said, "he was the greatest sailor since the world began."

As a boy, Horatio Nelson was not very strong, and few people thought him the right kind of lad for the hard life of a sailor. "What has poor Horatio who is so weak, done, that he should be sent to rough it at sea?" said his gruff, but kind-hearted, uncle, captain Suckling.

Now, although the boy was weak in

body, he was, at the same time, brave and daring. "I do not know what fear is," he said to his grandmother, when only six years old.

His father was the clergyman of Burnham Thorpe in Norfolk. Little Horatio,



Lord Nelson

and his elder brother William, rode on their ponies every day to a school some miles from their home. One day, in winter, the snow was so deep, that their father was half afraid to let them go to school.

"However," said he, "you may set out, and should the snow be too deep, you may return: but, do your best."

They started, and found it very hard work indeed; so William said, "Let us go back." "No," said the younger and braver lad, "father expects us to do our best, so let us try again." They did so, and the school was reached in safety.

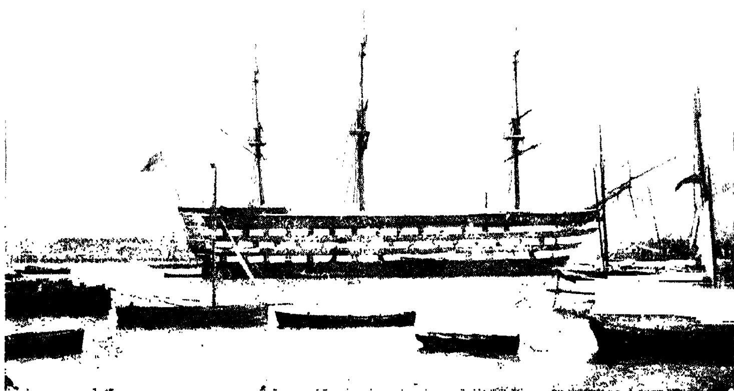
Another story is told of Nelson, when a boy, which shows that he was tender and loving, as well as brave. He was going into a shop one day, and, not seeing what he was doing, jammed a little pet lamb between the door and the counter. When he saw that he had hurt the little animal, he cried bitterly for some time.

Young Nelson was only thirteen when he joined his uncle's ship as a midshipman. Two years later, he went on a voyage to the cold, northern seas. One night, he and a friend, armed with guns, went in search of a white bear.

A thick fog came on; and the captain, when he found the two lads were missing,

was afraid they would be lost. About four o'clock in the morning, the fog cleared away; and from the ship the two lads could plainly be seen, trying to kill a huge bear.

A gun was fired from the vessel, to



The "Victory," Portsmouth harbour

let the truants know they must return. They had used up all their powder and shot, but, said Nelson to his friend, "let me get at the brute with the butt end of my gun, and we shall have him."

Another gun fired from the ship

frightened the bear off; and so Nelson and his friend returned to the vessel. You may be sure that the captain was very angry with them for going away without leave. "Why did you go after that bear?" said he. "Sir," replied Nelson, with a pout of his lip, "I wished to kill the bear, that I might take his skin home to my father."

Some of you may have heard the saying, "The boy makes the man." This means, that if a boy is brave and true, he will be almost certain to be the same when a man. Now, in the stories you have just read, you have seen that Nelson thought a great deal of duty; that he was very brave and daring; and that he was also kind and tender-hearted.

In the next chapter, you will see that as his men loved to say, our greatest seaman was, "brave as a lion, gentle as a lamb"; and that his last thoughts were of duty.

34. THE STORY OF NELSON, THE HERO OF THE NAVY

PART II

Before many years had passed, Nelson had become a captain, and had a fine ship under his command. At that time, we were at war with the French, who, under their great leader, Napoleon Bonaparte, were trying to conquer all the other nations of Europe.

Napoleon was, perhaps, the greatest soldier that ever lived ; and, for a long time, no armies could stand against him. But, at sea, our brave sailors were more than a match for the French, who were beaten everywhere.

Nelson had much fighting all over the world before he took part in a great battle. In one of these fights he lost the sight of one eye, and at another time he lost his right arm.

As a captain, Nelson was very proud of his men, and did all he could for their

comfort. There is no wonder that they were ready to go through any danger for him; and, as he said to a friend, "they thought no more of cannon balls than of peas."

To his young midshipmen, he was just as kind. If he saw that one of them was half afraid to climb up the tall mast, Nelson would say, "I am going to race you to the masthead, and will meet you there." Of course, no brave lad could then refuse to try, and when they met up aloft Nelson would say, "You see, it was not very hard, after all."

Nelson took part in four great battles at sea. In the first, he was not at the head of our fleet, but it was through his bravery and cleverness that the fight was won. But at the famous battle of the Nile, Nelson was in command of the British fleet, and the glory of the day was all his own.

He had been chasing the French for weeks, and at last he found them in a strong harbour, the sides of which were lined with cannon.



The Nelson monument, St Paul's cathedral

Now, all Nelson cared about was getting his ships as close as he could to the French vessels; and then his men, who could fire their guns twice as fast as their foes, soon battered in the sides of the French men-of-war.

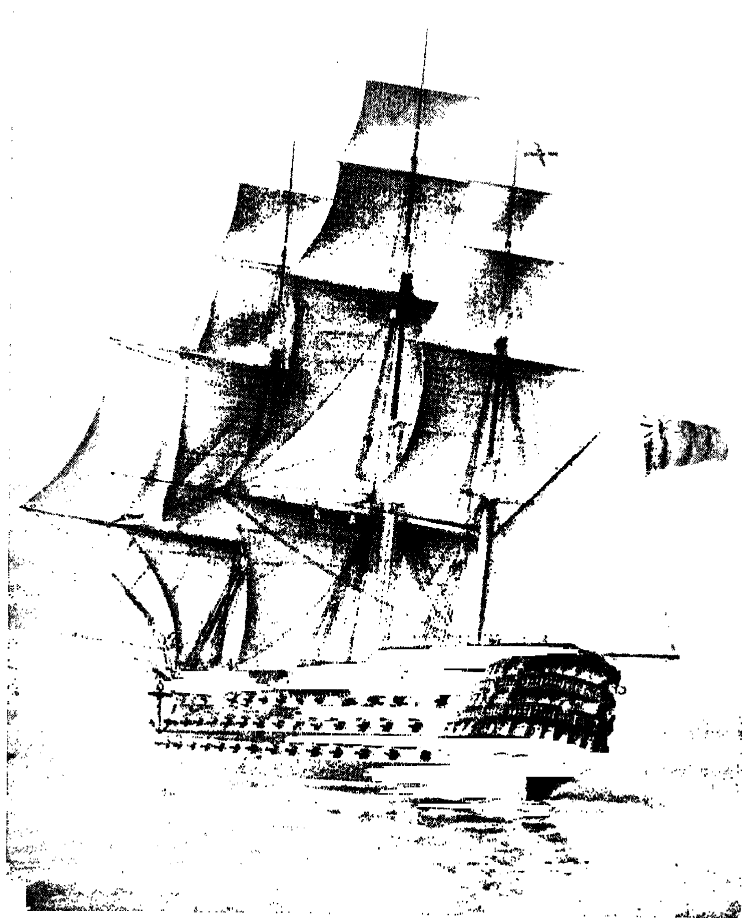
In this battle, Nelson was wounded and was carried below deck to the doctor. Around him lay many of his men, all wounded too. Of course, when the doctor saw Nelson, he at once came to attend to him.

The great admiral, however, would not allow him to do so, for, said he, "I will take my turn with my brave fellows." Here, again, you see his love for his men; and there is no need to wonder that they were ready to die for him.

This great battle was fought at night, and in the morning it was found that all the French ships were destroyed. There was much joy in our country when the news was heard, and the title of Lord Nelson was given to our great leader.

In another great battle, where, strange to say, Nelson was not at the head of our

fleet, the British admiral gave the order



The "Victory" leaving Portsmouth harbour

to stop fighting. This was done by a

signal made up of flags. Now Nelson wanted to go on with the fight, and so he put his telescope to his blind eye, and said, "I really do not see the signal, so go on with the battle," which, an hour afterwards, was won.

We are now coming to Nelson's last great fight—the battle of Trafalgar. For two years he had been looking for the fleets of France and Spain, and when he came in sight of them his ships at once got ready for battle.

Before the fight began, he gave his famous signal, "England expects every man to do his duty." When our British sailors saw it flying from Nelson's ship, the "Victory," they gave loud cheers, and were ready to fight their hardest.

In this, his last fight, Nelson wore his admiral's coat, which was covered with stars. These made him an easy mark for the riflemen who were in the rigging of the French ships. Soon, a bullet struck him in the shoulder, and he fell on his face upon the deck. His great friend, captain Hardy, at once ran to his help.



The death of Nelson

"They have done for me at last," said Nelson. "I hope not," replied Hardy. "Yes," said Nelson, "my backbone is shot through."

As the hero lay dying, the cheers of his men told him that the French ships were nearly all taken or burnt, and this thought cheered his last moments.

The doctor now told him that he had only a few minutes to live. Just then, Hardy came to his side. In little more than a whisper, the dying Nelson said, "Kiss me, Hardy." The captain did so, kissing his cheek. "Now I die happy. Thank God, I have done my duty," were the last words of Nelson.

Thus died our greatest sailor, and all Britain mourned for him. Once a year, at least, we remember what he did for us; and, on 21 October, or Trafalgar day, we deck his monument with wreaths and evergreens.

35. HOW THE SLAVES GAINED THEIR FREEDOM, OR THE STORY OF WILLIAM WILBERFORCE

All of you know that across the Atlantic ocean, lies the continent of America. In one part of it there are great fields where the cotton plant is grown; while in the West Indies, lying farther south, fields of sugar canes may be seen.

A hundred years ago, black slaves toiled in these plantations, as they were called; for white men could not, or would not, work under the burning sun of the tropics. In most cases, the lives of these poor slaves were very sad.

When quite young, they had been torn from their homes in Africa, marched in gangs over the burning sands to the sea coast, and there crowded into ships, called slavers. Here they were treated more like beasts than men; and it often happened that half of them died on the voyage.

When America was reached, they were sold in the market places, in the same way as we sell horses and cattle. Their new masters gave them food, but not wages; and, if they were lazy, or did not please their owners in any way, they were often cruelly whipped.

Now, you know that we often sing, "Britons never shall be slaves," yet, strange to say, most people in this country then thought it quite right and proper to make slaves of these poor negroes.

At last, in the reign of king George III, some good men began to think what a dreadful thing slavery was; and they gave up their lives to the grand work of freeing the slaves.

One of these good men was Granville Sharp. One day, he found a poor negro lying in a London street. He had been brought over from the West Indies by his master; but, as the poor slave was ill, and could not work, his cruel owner had turned him out to die.

Granville Sharp took the negro

home with him, fed and clothed him,



Granville Sharp

and very soon the poor fellow was quite

well and strong. Soon afterwards, his old master saw him in the street, and claimed him as his slave.

When Granville Sharp heard of this, he went to the poor fellow's help, and his hard master was forced to let him go. Not long after, the judges made it quite clear that, as soon as a slave set foot on the shores of Britain, he at once became a free man.

Then another good man, Thomas Clarkson, wrote and spoke against the trade in slaves; but it was William Wilberforce who really brought this great evil to an end.

When quite a young man, he led rather a gay and pleasant life; but, at the age of twenty-five, he turned his thoughts to serious things. One day, he bought a book written by Thomas Clarkson, and, when he had read it, he resolved to devote his life to the work of freeing the slaves.

He now spent much time in seeing captains of ships who told him all they knew about the slave trade. Now,

Wilberforce was a member of parlia-



William Wilberforce

ment, and one of his greatest friends was William Pitt, the prime minister.

Whenever Wilberforce had a chance, he talked to Pitt and other great men, and very soon he had them on his side. Some of these gentlemen went down to the docks in London, and saw for themselves what a slave ship was like.

Now, a great many men in the House of Commons were rich merchants, who made large profits by trading in slaves. As you may suppose, they did not like Wilberforce, and tried to hinder his good work in every way.

In spite of all this, he kept bravely on, and, after 20 years of hard work, he had the joy of knowing that no more slaves were to be taken to any part of our empire. Of course, there were still slaves in the West Indies, and many good men could not rest, till they were freed. One of the greatest of these was Thomas Fowell Buxton.

He was a friend of Wilberforce, and when that noble man was too ill to do any more work for the good cause he asked Buxton to take his place. Buxton was a fine man, both in mind and body,

just the one that was needed to carry out such a great task.

At last, in the year 1834, twenty million pounds were paid to the West Indian planters, so that, on a certain day, the slaves might become free men. The day agreed upon was 1 August.

The night before, all the churches and chapels in the West Indies were thrown open, and the slaves crowded into them. As midnight drew near, they fell on their knees in silent prayer

When the hour of twelve had struck, amid the clash of the bells, a great shout went up from thousands of lips; for at last their chains were broken, and the slaves were free.

36. GEORGE STEPHENSON, "THE FATHER OF THE RAILWAY"

There are old people living to-day who can just remember the time when there were no railways. Very few travelled far in those days; and, when they

did, the journey was done by a stage-coach drawn by four horses.

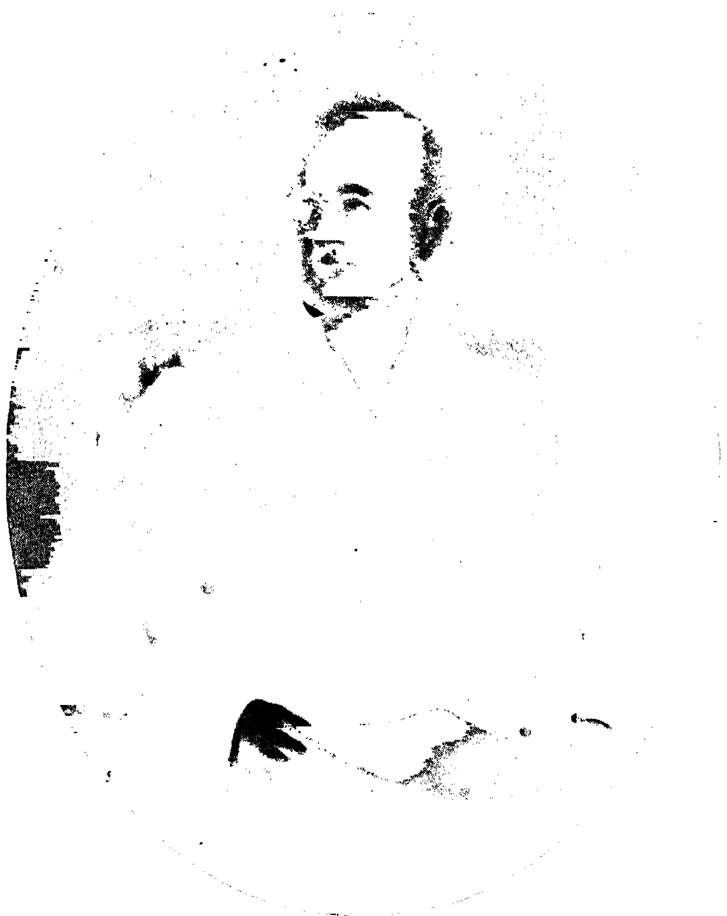
To-day, we can enter a fast train in one of the great London stations, and in four hours can reach the city of York. A hundred years ago, this same journey took five or six days. The life of George Stephenson shows how this great change was made.

His father worked in a mining village not far from Newcastle, and lived in a poor little cottage, with a clay floor, and without even plaster on the walls. He was too poor to send his little son George to school; and, when only eight years old, the little fellow was set to mind cows instead.

George was paid twopence a day for this work; but, later, he earned two shillings a week for minding horses, and doing other farm work.

Then we find him helping his father, who was the fireman of an engine. George soon became a fireman, too; and at the age of sixteen, he was earning twelve shillings a week.

How proud he was when he got his



George Stephenson

first week's wages! "Now I am a made man for life," he cried. His great delight

was to take his engine to pieces, and then put it together again. In this way, he soon knew every part of an engine, and what work it had to do.

Now, Stephenson had the good sense to know that, if he wanted to learn more about engines, he must read books. So, at the age of eighteen, he went to a night school, where he learned reading, writing and arithmetic.

A few years afterwards, Stephenson did a clever piece of work, which made him famous in that part of the country. A coal mine was flooded, and an engine had been made to pump out the water, but no one could make it work properly. Many clever men tried, but in vain; so, when Stephenson said he could make it work, he was allowed to try.

In less than a week, the engine was working well, and the mine was soon dry. Two years after this, he was placed in charge of all the engines in a colliery, and was paid £100 a year. Was not this a fine rise for the poor boy who had begun with twopence a day?

It was about this time that Stephenson began to think of making a railway engine. When a boy, he had often seen heavy wagons drawn along on iron rails by horses. He had heard, too, of some clumsy engines, which had been made to do the work instead of horses.

But these could only travel at the rate of two miles an hour, and cost so much to work that people could not afford to use them. Stephenson went to a place where one of these was in use. He looked at it very carefully, and then said he was quite sure he could make a much better one.

He did so in less than a year, and then he made a better one still. Some rich men now asked him to make a railway for them, between two towns in the north. Stephenson undertook the work, and soon his engines were drawing heavy loads at the rate of six miles an hour.

This was not very fast, you will say; but it was much better than anything that had been done before. His next

great work was to make a line from Liverpool to Manchester.

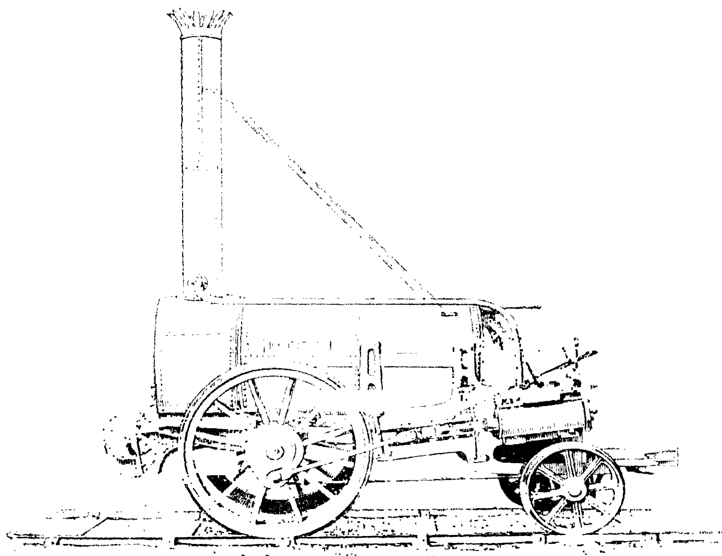
At one place, the railway had to be carried through a swamp. So stones and other things were driven in until the ground was quite firm, and then the rails were laid on the top of it.

George Stephenson was now asked by the owners of the line to make an engine which would travel at least ten miles an hour. How pleased they must have been when he finished the famous "Rocket," which travelled *thirty* miles in an hour!

When the railway was opened, he himself drove the train, and in the carriages were some of the most famous men of the day. The speed of the train filled them with wonder, for nothing like it had been heard of before.

Since that time, railway lines have spread like a great network, not only over this country, but also in other lands. For a few shillings, dwellers in smoky towns may be taken hundreds of miles to spend a happy day by the sea. Work-

men, too, who toil in big towns, are quickly carried to their homes at night,



The "Rocket"

far away from the noise and bustle of their daily work.

37. VICTORIA THE GOOD

This is the story of the royal mother of king Edward VII. Her reign of 63 years was the longest in our history, and in many ways it was one of the best.

Nearly a hundred years have passed since the May morning when little princess Victoria was born. Her father and mother, the duke and duchess of Kent, lived at Kensington palace, in London, which, years before, had been the favourite home of some of our kings.

The duke was very proud and fond of his little daughter. One day he showed her to a friend, and said, "Look at her well, for one day she will be queen of this country."

We are told that he was out walking one day, and was caught in a heavy shower of rain. When he got home, instead of at once changing his wet boots, the duke went up to the nursery of the little princess. He stopped to play with his baby girl, quite forgetting

about his wet feet, and thus caught a very bad cold.

In the morning, he was very ill and was forced to remain in bed. He soon grew worse, and in a few days he died,



Queen Victoria

leaving little princess Victoria to the care of her mother.

The duchess of Kent was a wise and good woman, and brought up her little girl in the very best way. She was taught to be truthful and unselfish; to finish one task before she began another; and to try to make others happy. Of

course, much of her time was given to study; for her mother knew that, if she lived, she would be queen, and would need to be very wise to rule this great empire well.

This still left the little princess time for play, and she was just as fond of her dolls as any other little girl. Some day, perhaps, you will visit the old palace at Kensington, where the doll's house and other playthings of princess Victoria may still be seen.

But it was not till she was twelve years old that she herself knew that she would be queen of Great Britain. One day, during her history lesson, a paper was placed in her book, and this made it all quite clear to her.

Then the princess understood why her mother had taken such pains to train her well. Turning to her teacher, she said, with tears in her eyes, "I will be good! I will be good!"

Many older persons would have felt proud and vain on hearing such news as this: but the only thought of Victoria was

how to fit herself for the great place she had to fill.

A few years passed away, and, when the princess was just eighteen years old, her uncle, king William IV, died, in 1837. Two great men, the archbishop of Canterbury and the lord chamberlain, at once set out from Windsor castle to bear the news to the princess.

They reached Kensington palace at five o'clock in the morning. They were told that princess Victoria was in such a sweet sleep that she must not be disturbed. They replied, "But we have come to see the *queen*," and thus it became known that the old king was dead.

In a very short time, the princess came down, and on bended knee the two gentlemen greeted her as queen. Tears filled her eyes—tears for the kind old uncle who was dead, and tears at the thought of the great duties she was now to perform.

About a year afterwards, she was crowned with great pomp and show in

Westminster abbey. Two years later, the queen married her cousin, prince Albert, a very handsome and noble man. For more than twenty years he was always at the queen's side, helping her with good advice and loving care.

These were very happy years for queen Victoria. But at length a great sorrow came into her life, for the "Prince Consort," as he was called, was stricken with fever. One dark December day, in 1861, the prince died, to the great grief of the queen and all the nation.

Queen Victoria lived for more than forty years after the death of her husband. During this time, she had many joys and sorrows. Several of her children died; and in the last few years of her reign her heart was filled with sadness owing to the loss of her brave soldiers in Africa.

Still, she had the joy of knowing that this country had grown rich and great under her wise rule. Her noble resolve to be good had helped to make her people good also. In the year 1897, she



Queen Victoria's Diamond jubilee, 1897

went in great state to St Paul's, to give thanks to God for her reign of sixty years.

This was known as the Diamond jubilee, and, from all parts of this great empire, people came to take part in the great event.

In 1901, queen Victoria died—and in every home in Britain great grief was felt at the loss of the "mother, wife and queen" whose long life had been such a fine model for her people.

38. THE STORY OF HAVELOCK, AND HOW THE PIPERS CAME TO LUCKNOW

You will remember the story of Robert Clive, and how his skill and daring added India to our empire. Just a hundred years later, in 1857, we were in great danger of losing India. In this story you will read how it happened.

For many years, British officers had trained the natives of India to be soldiers.

Some of them were known as sepoys, and, in the year just mentioned, they rose against their rulers, and did many cruel deeds. At one place, they killed a number of British women and children, and threw their bodies down a well.

They also surrounded the town of Lucknow, which was defended by a little band of British, under a good and brave soldier named Sir Henry Lawrence. He was killed by a shell, which crashed into the room where he was sitting.

We are told that, as he lay dying, he asked that these words might be put on his tomb, "Here lies Henry Lawrence, who tried to do his duty."

Although they had lost their leader, the British in Lucknow held out bravely against their cruel foes. A brave general, Sir Henry Havelock, was soon marching at the head of a little army, to save the town.

Havelock's men fought many battles before they reached Lucknow, and marched as quickly as the hot Indian sun would allow them. In every fight, they

beat the sepoys; so there is no wonder they were called "Havelock's Ironsides."

What a joyful scene it was, when these brave men reached the town! Great, bearded Highlanders grasped the hands of the women, and snatched the babies from their arms to kiss them.

They were filled with joy, at finding them safe; for, during their wonderful march, this thought was always in their minds, "Shall we get there in time to save them?" Now, Havelock's little army was not strong enough to drive away the many thousands of sepoys who were still around Lucknow: so the siege went on for some time longer.

Food now began to grow scarce, and it became hard for the men to keep up their strength. At this trying time, the women did all they could to cheer up the men, bringing them food and coffee both by day and night.

One of these women was Jessie Brown, the wife of a corporal. As the weary days dragged slowly along, Jessie fell ill, and was soon in a high fever.

One day, as she was lying in the



Sir Henry Havelock

hospital, she started wildly from the ground, with a loud cry. A look of

delight broke over her face, as she cried: "Dinna ye hear it? I'm no' dreaming, 'tis the slogan of the Highlanders! We're saved, saved!"

Those around her could hear nothing but the crack of rifles and the roar of the cannon, and they thought that poor Jessie was raving.

She then darted out to the batteries, where the gunners were, and cried "Courage! courage! Hear ye not the slogan? Here's help at last."

The gunners stopped firing and listened, but they could not hear anything. Like the others, they thought that the poor woman did not know what she was talking about.

For a few minutes, she sank to the ground; and then, in a voice so clear that it could be heard all along the line, she cried: "Will ye no' believe it now? They are playing, 'The Campbells are coming, ho, ho! ho, ho!' Do ye hear? Do ye hear?"

By this time, all could tell that Jessie Brown was right, for there was no mis-

taking the sound of the pipers. Sir Colin Campbell, a fine old warrior, had come to their help; and, stern soldier that he



Sir Colin Campbell

was, he must have been touched by the wild joy of all around him.

From the lips of the men and women, ay! and the children, too, rang out a great shout of joy. Never before, or since, has "God save the Queen" been sung as they

sang it; and when they tried to sing "Auld Lang Syne" the tears of joy streamed down their worn faces.

In a short time, Sir Colin Campbell was able to remove them all to a place of safety; and before long the sepoys were beaten everywhere, and the Indian mutiny was at an end.

39. FLORENCE NIGHTINGALE, "THE LADY WITH THE LAMP"

The long reign of queen Victoria was made famous by the great and good deeds of many noble men and women. One of these, Miss Florence Nightingale, was loved by her countrymen for her kind and loving care of our sick and wounded soldiers, in the great war with Russia.

This lady was born in the fine old city of Florence, in Italy, and that is why her parents gave her that name. They soon returned to their beautiful home in Derbyshire; and here the little girl spent a very happy childhood.



Florence Nightingale at Scutari

She was always very fond of birds and animals, and one of the stories told of her is about her kindness to a poor dog. A cruel boy had thrown a stone at it, and its master, an old shepherd, thought its leg was broken. He showed it to Florence Nightingale, who bathed the wound, and then bound it up with much care and tenderness.

In a few days, the poor dog was better. After this, it became quite a common thing, when anyone had a cut or a bruise, to send for "Miss Florence." You may be sure that sick animals, also, were not forgotten by the kind-hearted little girl.

As she grew older, she began to visit the hospitals of this country, and, later, those of other countries, too. In this way, she learned how to deal with large numbers of sick people ; what treatment was best for different kinds of disease ; and how to bring comfort to those lying on beds of pain. In this good work, she spent more than ten years of her life. The time was now coming when her

great gifts as a nurse were to be put to their highest use.

Our country was at war with Russia, in the Crimea, and sad stories were told of the sufferings of our wounded soldiers there.

People heard with shame and sorrow of poor, sick men, lying out on the bare ground, with no one to comfort them in their pain and weakness. There was quite enough coarse and bad food for them, such as the soldiers had who were well. There were, however, none of those little dainties so much needed by those who are ill.

The doctors did their best for the men; but so great was the number of the wounded that they could not attend to them all. Hundreds died of cold and hunger, or of their wounds.

Florence Nightingale's heart was filled with pity, as she read these sad accounts in our newspapers. So, one day, she wrote to a great man in the government, offering to go out as a nurse. He was very pleased to accept her noble offer;

and, in a very short time, she set out with a band of thirty-eight nurses.

When they reached Scutari, where the sick and wounded had been taken, these nurses found everything in a very bad state. It took several months of hard work to put everything in good order, and by this time there were two or three thousand men under their care.

Soon, they were joined by another band of fifty nurses. Things were so well arranged now, that a cry of pain from a poor suffering man soon brought a nurse to his side, to attend to his wants.

Florence Nightingale was at the head of this great hospital, and saw that everything was done properly. This left her very little time for rest. Yet, she might often be seen, late at night, going through the long line of beds, with a little lamp in her hand.

As she passed along, she would say a kind word to one, and smile at another; and it is said that the sick men would

kiss her shadow, as it fell on their pillows. They would then rest their heads on their pillows again, quite content.

For nearly two years did these good women remain at their post. Some of them died, and many suffered from fever. Among these was Florence Nightingale herself, and the doctors thought that she, too, would die. But, at last, she began to get better, and before long was at her work again. When this sad war came to an end, our soldiers returned home, and so, of course, did Florence Nightingale and her band of nurses.

Queen Victoria had already sent a kind letter to her and a beautiful cross, covered with jewels. On it were these words, in letters of gold, "Blessed are the Merciful."

A large sum of money was collected throughout Britain, for "the soldiers' friend," as Florence Nightingale was called. By her own wish, a home for nurses was set up in St Thomas's hospital with the money.

Here may be seen a fine statue of this great and good woman, carrying the little lamp in her hand. Well might the poet say, speaking of her—

> "A Lady with a lamp shall stand,
> In the great history of the land."

40. GENERAL GORDON—A GREAT CHRISTIAN HERO

Charles George Gordon, the last of a famous race of soldiers, was born at Woolwich, in Kent, in 1833. As a boy, he was very brave and fearless, loving the right, and scorning to do anything that he knew was mean or wrong.

He entered the army at the age of sixteen, and a few years later he was sent out to the Crimea. As you know, our brave fellows suffered a great deal during the cold Russian winter; and Gordon's work was to see that wooden huts were built for them.

Many had died before this could be done; but Gordon and the men under

him worked so hard that soon the huts were put up, and the soldiers made quite comfortable. During the same year, he had much fighting in the trenches, sometimes staying there for twenty hours without rest or food.

When the war was over, Gordon returned home; but, after a few years, he took part in a war with China. He must have shown himself a very fine soldier, for, after the war, the Chinese asked him to train their army, and lead it against some rebels.

He led his men into many a fierce fight, carrying nothing in his hand but a cane. This seemed to be a magic wand, with which he led his troops to victory. Soon, the rebels were beaten on every side, and we can understand how grateful the Chinese were to Gordon.

They offered him a large sum of money, but Gordon would not take it, as he knew the Chinese were poor. So the emperor gave him instead a gold medal, and a yellow jacket. This last was the greatest honour bestowed in that

strange land; for only twenty of the best men in the emperor's body-guard were allowed to wear it.

"Chinese Gordon," as he was now called, was not proud because of his great deeds. He returned to England a poor man, wishing only to serve God, by doing all the good that lay in his power.

For six years after his return he lived at Gravesend. His work as a soldier kept him busy all day; but, in the evening, he gave up his time to train a number of ragged boys. He fed and clothed them, and taught them to be honest and manly.

Then he got them into good places, and many of them went to sea. A peep into Gordon's study would have shown you a large map of the world, hanging on the wall. In this, he stuck a number of pins, each one showing where his boys happened to be: for, in the midst of all his work, Gordon found time to write to his "kings," as he loved to speak of them.

Not only ragged boys, but, also, anyone who was poor and in trouble found a



The Gordon Statue, Trafalgar Square

friend in colonel Gordon. A gentleman once asked to see his gold medal, but Gordon made some excuse for not showing it. In after years it was found that he had sold his medal, and given the money to the poor!

A few years later, Gordon was made governor of a part of Africa. It was his work to get the country into good order, and to try to stop the slave trade, which was still carried on there.

Gordon's heart was full of pity for the poor slaves who had to carry heavy loads of ivory for the traders. Mounted on a swift camel, he rode to all parts under his rule, to put a stop to the cruel work.

This life was very hard and trying for general Gordon, as we may now call him. Several of his friends died of fever, and he, himself, was worn to a shadow; but he still kept bravely on. You will be sorry to hear, however, that, after five or six years of earnest toil for these poor people, he had to give up his post before his great task was done.

Then, for a few years, he travelled in

many lands, gaining new life and strength in this way. He spent a very happy time in the Holy Land, visiting the sacred places where our Lord lived and died.



The Blue Nile, from the palace, Khartum

But, once again, the path of duty for general Gordon led him to Africa. He was sent out by our government to save a great number of poor people. These

were shut up in Khartum, a town on the river Nile.

He managed to send away two or three thousand women and children; but, before long, the fierce Arabs, under their leader, the Mahdi, closed round the town.

When it became known in this country that general Gordon's life was in danger, there was much talk about the best way of sending help to him. But nothing was done for months.

Then an army was sent up the Nile to save Khartum. When it came in sight of the town, our soldiers saw that the British flag was no longer flying. Two days before, the Mahdi had taken the place, and Gordon had been killed on the steps of his palace.

It was a dark day for Britain when the sad news came, and bitter was the thought that this precious life might have been saved. But Gordon has left behind him, like the great Havelock, the memory of a noble, Christian soldier.

41. EDWARD THE PEACEMAKER AND GEORGE V

King Edward the Seventh was the eldest son of queen Victoria, and her husband, the Prince Consort. For nearly 70 years, his sayings and doings were followed with great interest by the people of this country.

"He is a pleasing, lively boy," said someone who knew him at the age of six. Of course, the good and wise queen Victoria was very careful to have him well taught. He had the best teachers in all branches of knowledge, and the queen herself took the greatest interest in his studies.

As the future king of dominions on which the sun never sets, it was thought right that the prince of Wales should visit some of our lands beyond the sea. So we hear of him shooting tigers in India, and making journeys in a canoe on the rivers of Canada.

There were great rejoicings in 1863 when the prince married a Danish



King Edward VII



Queen Alexandra

princess—queen Alexandra. The lovely "Sea King's daughter from over the sea" charmed the hearts of all who saw her. Never had such crowds been seen in London as greeted the prince and his bride.

Some years later, in 1871, the voice of prayer was heard throughout the land for our beloved prince. He had been stricken down with fever, and for some days it was thought he would die. At last, he began to grow better, and a solemn service was held in St Paul's cathedral, to thank God for bringing him back to health.

For some years before queen Victoria died, many of her duties were carried out by the prince, so that he was quite used to the work of a king, when he began to reign in 1901.

The crowning of king Edward and queen Alexandra in 1902 was a very grand ceremony. The streets of London were quite gay with tall masts, flags and fairy lamps, while the bells rang merrily and cannon fired loud salutes.

Crowds of people had filled the streets from early morning. The day was very fine, and when the king and queen passed along in a grand carriage, drawn by eight cream coloured horses, loud cheers filled the air.

When the king and queen reached Westminster abbey, that grand old building was filled by about 6000 people, many of whom had come from all parts of our empire. The queen went first to her seat, wearing a fine robe of purple velvet and white fur.

King Edward entered the abbey a few minutes later. Very stately he looked in his crimson robes, and on each side of him walked an archbishop. When he was seated in St Edward's chair, he was crowned by the archbishop of Canterbury. Then the bells rang again, trumpets were blown, and the people shouted "God save the King."

Queen Alexandra was then crowned by the archbishop of York, and, when the short service was over, all who were present sang the national anthem.



King George V



Queen Mary

Throughout the land, the day was spent in feasting and merrymaking, and at night bonfires blazed.

During the nine years of his reign, king Edward ruled us wisely and well. He led a very busy life, and did many things for the good of his people.

In the olden days, kings often led their armies to war: now, the best and wisest of monarchs are lovers of peace. We know that king Edward did a very great deal to keep Britain at peace with other nations.

He paid visits to most of the rulers of Europe, and many of them were his guests. The king was liked wherever he went, whether it was to Sandringham, his country home in Norfolk, or to some foreign town which he liked to visit.

To the great sorrow of all his people, and, indeed, of the whole world, this wise and great monarch died in May 1910, after a very short illness.

Like the knights of old, king Edward died fighting; not, it is true, on the field of battle, but in trying to do his duty

as a king, even on the day of his death. "I will work to the end" was one of the last things he said.

Our sailor-monarch, George V, has now succeeded to his father's throne.

In the summer of 1911 the thoughts not only of us who live in England, but of all the "Britons beyond the seas" were turned to Westminster Abbey, where the crowning of our king and queen took place. Amidst great pomp and splendour the imperial crown was placed upon king George's head and on the following days the people of London and of the many other towns which he visited were able to give him and queen Mary a loyal and eager welcome.

Later in the year the king and queen showed how anxious they were to make themselves known to the millions of our Indian empire by making a voyage to the East and receiving the homage of the Indian princes at the great coronation Durbar at Delhi. This ancient city was now declared to be the capital of the

Indian empire and those who saw the wonderful ceremony tell us what a great deal of good the royal visit did to the country in winning the love and strengthening the loyalty of the native peoples.

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